THE PAT OF SILVER BUSH CHRONICLES

LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY

The Pat of Silver Bush Chronicles (Extended Annotated Edition)

Lucy Maud Montgomery

Contents:

The Pat of Silver Bush Chronicles, L. M. Montgomery
Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9
Germany

ISBN: 9783849614164

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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.

PAT OF SILVER BUSH

"God gave all men all earth to love
But, since our hearts are small,
Ordained for each one spot should be

Beloved over all."

Kipling

To
Alec and May
and
The Secret Field

1 - Introduces Pat

1

"Oh, oh, and I think I'll soon have to be doing some rooting in the parsley bed," said Judy Plum, as she began to cut Winnie's red crepe dress into strips suitable for "hooking." She was very much pleased with herself because she had succeeded in browbeating Mrs. Gardiner into letting her have it. Mrs. Gardiner thought Winnie might have got another summer's wear out of it. Red crepe dresses were not picked up in parsley beds, whatever else might be.

But Judy had set her heart on that dress. It was exactly the shade she wanted for the inner petals of the fat, "raised" roses in the fine new rug she was hooking for Aunt Hazel . . . a rug with golden-brown "scrolls" around its edges and, in the centre, clusters of red and purple roses such as never grew on any earthly rose-bush.

Judy Plum "had her name up," as she expressed it, for hooked rugs, and she meant that this should be a masterpiece. It was to be a wedding gift for Aunt Hazel, if

that young lady really got married this summer, as, in Judy's opinion, it was high time she should, after all her picking and choosing.

Pat, who was greatly interested in the rug's progress, knew nothing except that it was for Aunt Hazel. Also, there was another event impending at Silver Bush of which she was ignorant and Judy thought it was high time she was warned. When one has been the "baby" of a family for almost seven years just how is one going to take a supplanter? Judy, who loved everybody at Silver Bush in reason, loved Pat out of reason and was worried over this beyond all measure. Pat was always after taking things a bit too seriously. As Judy put it, she "loved too hard." What a scene she had been after making that very morning because Judy wanted her old purple sweater for the roses. It was far too tight for her and more holy than righteous, if ye plaze, but Pat wouldn't hear of giving it up. She loved that old sweater and she meant to wear it another year. She fought so tigerishly about it that Judy . . . of course . . . gave in. Pat was always like that about her clothes. She wore them until they simply wouldn't look at her because they were so dear to her she couldn't bear to give them up. She hated her new duds until she had worn them for a few weeks. Then she turned around and loved them fiercely, too.

"A quare child, if ye'll belave me," Judy used to say, shaking her grizzled head. But she would have put the black sign on any one else who called Pat a queer child.

"What makes her queer?" Sidney had asked once, a little belligerently. Sidney loved Pat and didn't like to hear her called queer.

"Sure, a leprachaun touched her the day she was born wid a liddle green rose-thorn," answered Judy mysteriously.

Judy knew all about leprachauns and banshees and water-kelpies and fascinating beings like that.

"So she can't ever be just like other folks. But it isn't all to the bad. She'll be after having things other folks can't have."

"What things?" Sidney was curious.

"She'll love folks . . . and things . . . better than most . . . and that'll give her the great delight. But they'll hurt her more, too. 'Tis the way of the fairy gift and ye have to take the bad wid the good."

"If that's all the leppern did for her I don't think he amounts to much," said young Sidney scornfully.

"S . . . sh!" Judy was scandalised. "Liddle ye know what may be listening to ye. And I'm not after saying it was all. She'll *see* things. Hundreds av witches flying be night over the woods and steeples on broomsticks, wid their black cats perched behind them. How wud ye like that?"

"Aunt Hazel says there aren't any such things as witches, 'specially in Prince Edward Island," said Sidney.

"If ye don't be belaving innything what fun are ye going to get out av life?" asked Judy unanswerably. "There may niver be a witch in P. E. Island but there's minny a one in ould Ireland even yet. The grandmother av me was one."

"Are *you* a witch?" demanded Sidney daringly. He had always wanted to ask Judy that.

"I might be having a liddle av it in me, though I'm not be way av being a full witch," said Judy significantly.

"And are you sure the leppern pricked Pat?"

"Sure? Who cud be sure av what a fairy might be doing? Maybe it's only the mixed blood in her makes her quare. Frinch and English and Irish and Scotch and Quaker . . . 'tis a tarrible mixture, I'm telling ye."

"But that's all so long ago," argued Sidney. "Uncle Tom says it's just Canadian now."

"Oh, oh," said Judy, highly offended, "if yer Uncle Tom do be knowing more about it than meself whativer are ye here plaguing me to death wid yer questions for? Scoot, scat, and scamper, or I'll warm your liddle behind for ye."

"I don't believe there's either witches or fairies," cried Sid, just to make her madder. It was always fun to make Judy Plum mad.

"Oh, oh, indade! Well, I knew a man in ould Ireland said the same thing. Said it as bould as brass, he did. And he met some one night, whin he was walking home from where he'd no business to be. Oh, oh, what they did to him!"

"What . . . what?" demanded Sid eagerly.

"Niver ye be minding what it was. 'Tis better for ye niver to know. He was niver the same again and he held his tongue about the Good Folk after that, belave me. Only I'm advising ye to be a bit careful what ye say out loud whin ye think ye're all alone, me bould young lad."

2

Judy was hooking her rug in her own bedroom, just over the kitchen . . . a fascinating room, so the Silver Bush children thought. It was not plastered. The walls and ceiling were finished with smooth bare boards which Judy kept beautifully whitewashed. The bed was an enormous one with a fat chaff tick. Judy scorned feathers and mattresses were, she believed, a modern invention of the Bad Man Below. It had pillowslips trimmed with crocheted "pineapple" lace, and was covered with a huge "autograph quilt" which some local society had made years before and which Judy had bought.

"Sure and I likes to lie there a bit when I wakes and looks at all the names av people that are snug underground and me still hearty and kicking," she would say.

The Silver Bush children all liked to sleep a night now and then with Judy, until they grew too big for it, and listen to her tales of the folks whose names were on the quilt. Old forgotten fables . . . ancient romances . . . Judy knew them all, or made them up if she didn't. She had a marvellous memory and a knack of dramatic word-painting. Judy's tales were not always so harmless as that. She had an endless store of weird yarns of ghosts and "rale nice murders," and it was a wonder she did not scare the children out of a year's growth. But they were only deliciously goosefleshed. They knew Judy's stories were "lies," but no matter. They were absorbing and interesting lies. Judy had a delightful habit of carrying a tale on night after night, with a trick of stopping at just the right breathless place which any writer of serial stories would have envied her. Pat's favourite one was a horrible tale of a

murdered man who was found in pieces about the house . . . an arm in the garret . . . a head in the cellar . . . a hambone in a pot in the pantry. "It gives me such a lovely shudder, Judy."

Beside the bed was a small table covered with a crocheted tidy, whereon lay a beaded, heart-shaped pin-cushion and a shell-covered box in which Judy kept the first tooth of all the children and a lock of their hair. Also a razor-fish shell from Australia and a bit of beeswax that she used to make her thread smooth and which was seamed with innumerable fine, criss-cross wrinkles like old Great-great-aunt Hannah's face at the Bay Shore. Judy's Bible lay there, too, and a fat little brown book of "Useful Knowledge" out of which Judy constantly fished amazing information. It was the only book Judy ever read. Folks, she said, did be more interesting than books.

Bunches of dried tansy and yarrow and garden herbs hung from the ceiling everywhere and looked gloriously spooky on moonlight nights. Judy's big blue chest which she had brought out with her from the Old Country thirty years ago stood against the wall and when Judy was in especial good humour she would show the children the things in it . . . an odd and interesting *mélange,* for Judy had been about the world a bit in her time. Born in Ireland she had "worked out" in her teens . . . in a "castle" no less, as the Silver Bush children heard with amazed eyes. Then she had gone to England and worked there until a roving brother took a notion to go to Australia and Judy went with him. Australia not being to his liking he next tried Canada and settled down on a P. E. Island farm for a few years. Judy went to work at Silver Bush in the days of Pat's grandparents, and, when her brother announced his determination to pull up stakes and go to the Klondike, Judy coolly told him he could go alone. She liked "the Island." It was more like the Ould

Country than any place she'd struck. She liked Silver Bush and she loved the Gardiners.

Judy had been at Silver Bush ever since. She had been there when "Long Alec" Gardiner brought his young bride home. She had been there when each of the children was born. She belonged there. It was impossible to think of Silver Bush without her. With her flair for picking up tales and legends she knew more of the family history than any of the Gardiners themselves did.

She never had had any notion of marrying.

"I niver had but the one beau," she told Pat once. "He seranaded me under me windy one night and I poured a jug av suds over him. Maybe it discouraged him. Innyway, he niver got any forrarder."

"Were you sorry?" asked Pat.

"Niver a bit, me jewel. He hadn't the sinse God gave geese innyhow."

"Do you think you'll ever marry now, Judy?" asked Pat anxiously. It would be so terrible if Judy married and went away.

"Oh, oh, at me age! And me as grey as a cat!"

"How old are you, Judy Plum?"

"'Tis hardly a civil question that, but ye're too young to know it. I do be as old as me tongue and a liddle older than me teeth. Don't be fretting yer liddle gizzard about me marrying. Marrying's a trouble and not marrying's a trouble and I sticks to the trouble I knows."

"I'm never going to marry either, Judy," said Pat. "Because if I got married I'd have to go away from Silver Bush, and I couldn't bear that. We're going to stay here always . . . Sid and me . . . and you'll stay with us, won't you, Judy? And teach me how to make cheeses."

"Oh, oh, cheeses, is it? Thim cheese factories do be making all the cheeses now. There isn't a farm on the Island but Silver Bush that does be making thim. And this is the last summer I'll be doing thim I'm thinking."

"Oh, Judy Plum, you *mustn't* give up making cheeses. You must make them forever. *Please,* Judy Plum?"

"Well, maybe I'll be making two or three for the family," conceded Judy. "Yer dad do be always saying the factory ones haven't the taste av the home-made ones. How could they, I'm asking ye? Run be the min! What do min be knowing about making cheeses? Oh, oh, the changes since I first come to the Island!"

"I *hate* changes," cried Pat, almost in tears.

It had been so terrible to think of Judy never making any more cheeses. The mysterious mixing in of something she called "rennet" . . . the beautiful white curds next morning . . . the packing of it in the hoops . . . the stowing it away under the old "press" by the church barn with the round grey stone for a weight. Then the long drying and mellowing of the big golden moons in the attic . . . all big save one dear tiny one made in a special hoop for Pat. Pat knew everybody in North Glen thought the Gardiners terribly old-fashioned because they still made their own cheeses, but who cared for that? Hooked rugs were old-fashioned, too, but summer visitors and tourists raved over

them and would have bought all Judy Plum made. But Judy would never sell one. They were for the house at Silver Bush and no other.

3

Judy was hooking furiously, trying to finish her rose before the "dim," as she always called the twilights of morning and evening. Pat liked that. It sounded so lovely and strange. She was sitting on a little stool on the landing of the kitchen stairs, just outside Judy's open door, her elbows on her thin knees, her square chin cupped in her hands. Her little laughing face, that always seemed to be laughing even when she was sad or mad or bad, was ivory white in winter but was already beginning to pick up its summer tan. Her hair was ginger-brown and straight . . . and long. Nobody at Silver Bush, except Aunt Hazel, had yet dared to wear bobbed hair. Judy raised such a riot about it that mother hadn't ventured to cut Winnie's or Pat's. The funny thing was that Judy had bobbed hair herself and so was in the very height of the fashion she disdained. Judy had always worn her grizzled hair short. Hadn't time to be fussing with hairpins she declared.

Gentleman Tom sat beside Pat, on the one step from the landing into Judy's room, blinking at her with insolent green eyes, whose very expression would have sent Judy to the stake a few hundred years ago. A big, lanky cat who always looked as if he had a great many secret troubles; continually thin in spite of Judy's partial coddling; a black cat . . . "the blackest black cat I iver did be seeing." For a time he had been nameless. Judy held it wasn't lucky to name a baste that had just "come." Who knew what might be offended? So the black grimalkin was called Judy's Cat,

with a capital, until one day Sid referred to it as "Gentleman Tom," and Gentleman Tom he was from that time forth, even Judy surrendering. Pat was fond of all cats, but her fondness for Gentleman Tom was tempered with awe. He had come from nowhere apparently, not even having been born like other kittens, and attached himself to Judy. He slept on the foot of her bed, walked beside her, with his ramrod of a tail straight up in the air, wherever she went and had never been heard to purr. It couldn't be said that he was a sociable cat. Even Judy, who would allow no faults in him, admitted he was "a bit particular who he spoke to."

"Sure and he isn't what ye might call a talkative cat but he do be grand company in his way."

2 - Introduces Silver Bush

1

Pat's brook-brown eyes had been staring through the little round window in the wall above the landing until Judy had made her mysterious remark about the parsley bed. It was her favourite window, opening outward like the port-hole of a ship. She never went up to Judy's room without stopping to look from it. Dear little fitful breezes came to that window that never came anywhere else and you saw such lovely things out of it. The big grove of white birch on the hill behind it which gave Silver Bush its name and which was full of dear little screech owls that hardly ever screeched but purred and laughed. Beyond it all the dells and slopes and fields of the old farm, some of them fenced

in with the barbed wire Pat hated, others still surrounded by the snake fences of silvery-grey "longers," with golden-rod and aster thick in their angles.

Pat loved every field on the farm. She and Sidney had explored every one of them together. To her they were not just fields . . . they were persons. The big hill field that was in wheat this spring and was now like a huge green carpet; the field of the Pool which had in its very centre a dimple of water, as if some giantess when earth was young had pressed the tip of her finger down into the soft ground: it was framed all summer in daisies and blue flags and she and Sid bathed their hot tired little feet there on sultry days. The Mince Pie field, which was a triangle of land running up into the spruce bush: the swampy Buttercup field where all the buttercups in the world bloomed; the field of Farewell Summers which in September would be dotted all over with clumps of purple asters; the Secret Field away at the back, which you couldn't see at all and would never suspect was there until you had gone through the woods, as she and Sid had daringly done one day, and come upon it suddenly, completely surrounded by maple and fir woods, basking in a pool of sunshine, scented by the breath of the spice ferns that grew in golden clumps around it. Its feathery bent grasses were starred with the red of wild strawberry leaves; and there were some piles of large stones here and there, with bracken growing in their crevices and clusters of long-stemmed strawberries all around their bases. That was the first time Pat had ever picked a "bouquet" of strawberries.

In the corner by which they entered were two dear little spruces, one just a hand's-breadth taller than the other . . . brother and sister, just like Sidney and her. Wood Queen and Fern Princess, they had named them instantly. Or

rather Pat did. She loved to name things. It made them just like people . . . people you loved.

They loved the Secret Field better than all the other fields. It seemed somehow to belong to them as if they had been the first to discover it; it was so different from the poor, bleak, little stony field behind the barn that nobody loved . . . nobody except Pat. She loved it because it was a Silver Bush field. That was enough for Pat.

But the fields were not all that could be seen from that charming window on this delightful spring evening when the sky in the west was all golden and soft pink, and Judy's "dim" was creeping down out of the silver bush. There was the Hill of the Mist to the east, a little higher than the hill of the silver bush, with three lombardies on its very top, like grim, black, faithful watchmen. Pat loved that hill dreadfully hard, although it wasn't on Silver Bush land . . . quite a mile away in fact, and she didn't know to whom it belonged; in one sense, that is: in another she knew it was hers because she loved it so much. Every morning she waved a hand of greeting to it from her window. Once, when she was only five, she remembered going to spend the day with the Great-aunts at the Bay Shore farm and how frightened she had been lest the Hill of the Mist might be moved while she was away. What a joy it had been to come home and find it still in its place, with its three poplars untouched, reaching up to a great full moon above them. She was now, at nearly seven, so old and wise that she knew the Hill of the Mist would never be moved. It would always be there, go where she would, return when she might. This was comforting in a world which Pat was already beginning to suspect was full of a terrible thing called change . . . and another terrible thing which she was not yet old enough to know was disillusionment. She only knew that whereas a year ago she had firmly believed that

if she could climb to the top of the Hill of the Mist she might be able to touch that beautiful shining sky, perhaps . . . oh, rapture! . . . pick a trembling star from it, she knew now that nothing of the sort was possible. Sidney had told her this and she had to believe Sid who, being a year older than herself, knew so much more than she did. Pat thought nobody knew as much as Sidney . . . except, of course, Judy Plum who knew everything. It was Judy who knew that the wind spirits lived on the Hill of the Mist. It was the highest hill for miles around and the wind spirits did always be liking high points. Pat knew what they looked like, though nobody had ever told her . . . not even Judy who thought it safer not to be after describing the craturs. Pat knew the north wind was a cold, glittering spirit and the east wind a grey shadowy one; but the spirit of the west wind was a thing of laughter and the south wind was a thing of song.

The kitchen garden was just below the window, with Judy's mysterious parsley bed in one corner, and beautiful orderly rows of onions and beans and peas. The well was beside the gate . . . the old-fashioned open well with a handle and roller and a long rope with a bucket at its end, which the Gardiners kept to please Judy who simply wouldn't hear of any new-fangled pump being put in. Sure and the water would never be the same again. Pat was glad Judy wouldn't let them change the old well. It was beautiful, with great ferns growing out all the way down its sides from the crevices of the stones that lined it, almost hiding from sight the deep clear water fifty feet below, which always mirrored a bit of blue sky and her own little face looking up at her from those always untroubled depths. Even in winter the ferns were there, long and green, and always the mirrored Patricia looked up at her from a world where tempests never blew. A big maple grew over the well . . . a maple that reached with green arms to the house, every year a little nearer.

Pat could see the orchard, too . . . a most extraordinary orchard with spruce trees and apple trees delightfully mixed up together . . . in the Old Part, at least. The New Part was trim and cultivated and not half so interesting. In the Old Part were trees that Great-grandfather Gardiner had planted and trees that had never been planted at all but just *grew,* with delightful little paths criss-crossing all over it. At the far end was a corner full of young spruces with a tiny sunny glade in the midst of them, where several beloved cats lay buried and where Pat went when she wanted to "think things out." Things sometimes have to be thought out even at nearly seven.

2

At one side of the orchard was the grave-yard. Yes, truly, a grave-yard. Where Great-great-grandfather, Nehemiah Gardiner, who had come out to P. E. Island in 1780, was buried, and likewise his wife, Marie Bonnet, a French Huguenot lady. Great-grandfather, Thomas Gardiner, was there, too, with his Quaker bride, Jane Wilson. They had been buried there when the nearest grave-yard was across the Island at Charlottetown, only to be reached by a bridle path through the woods. Jane Wilson was a demure little lady who always wore Quaker grey and a prim, plain cap. One of her caps was still in a box in the Silver Bush attic. She it was who had fought off the big black bear trying to get in at the window of their log cabin by pouring scalding hot mush on its face. Pat loved to hear Judy tell that story and describe how the bear had torn away through the stumps back of the cabin, pausing every once in so long for a frantic attempt to scrape the mush off its face. Those must have been exciting days in P. E. Island, when the

woods were alive with bears and they would come and put their paws on the banking of the houses and look in at the windows. What a pity that could never happen now because there were no bears left! Pat always felt sorry for the last bear. How lonesome he must have been!

Great-uncle Richard was there . . . "Wild Dick Gardiner" who had been a sailor and had fought with sharks, and was reputed to have once eaten human flesh. He had sworn he would never rest on land. When he lay dying of measles . . . of all things for a dare-devil sailor to die of . . . he had wanted his brother Thomas to promise to take him out in a boat and bury him under the waters of the Gulf. But scandalised Thomas would do nothing of the sort and buried Dick in the family plot. As a result, whenever any kind of misfortune was going to fall on the Gardiners, Wild Dick used to rise and sit on the fence and sing his rake-helly songs until his sober, God-fearing kinsfolk had to come out of their graves and join him in the chorus. At least, this was one of Judy Plum's most thrilling yarns. Pat never believed it but she wished she could. Weeping Willy's grave was there, too . . . Nehemiah's brother who, when he first came to P. E. Island and saw all the huge trees that had to be cleared away, had sat down and cried. It was never forgotten. Weeping Willy he was to his death and after, and no girl could be found willing to be Mrs. Weeping Willy. So he lived his eighty years out in sour old bachelorhood and . . . so Judy said . . . when good fortune was to befall his race Weeping Willy sat on his flat tombstone and wept. And Pat couldn't believe that either. But she wished Weeping Willy *could* come back and see what was in the place of the lonely forest that had frightened him. If he could see Silver Bush *now!*

Then there was the "mystery grave." On the tombstone the inscription, *"To my own dear Emily and our little Lilian."*

Nothing more, not even a date. Who was Emily? Not one of the Gardiners, that was known. Perhaps some neighbour had asked the privilege of burying his dear dead near him in the Gardiner plot where she might have company in the lone new land. And how old was the little Lilian? Pat thought if any of the Silver Bush ghosts did "walk" she wished it might be Lilian. She wouldn't be the least afraid of *her.*

There were many children buried there . . . nobody knew how many because there was no stone for any of them. The Great-greats had horizontal slabs of red sandstone from the shore propped on four legs, over them, with all their names and virtues inscribed thereon. The grass grew about them thick and long and was never disturbed. On summer afternoons the sandstone slabs were always hot and Gentleman Tom loved to lie there, beautifully folded up in slumber. A paling fence, which Judy Plum whitewashed scrupulously every spring, surrounded the plot. And the apples that fell into the grave-yard from overhanging boughs were never eaten. "It wudn't be rispictful," explained Judy. They were gathered up and given to the pigs. Pat could never understand why, if it wasn't "rispictful" to eat those apples, it was any more "rispictful" to feed them to the pigs.

She was very proud of the grave-yard and very sorry the Gardiners had given up being buried there. It would be so nice, Pat thought, to be buried right at home, so to speak, where you could hear the voices of your own folks every day and all the nice sounds of home . . . nice sounds such as Pat could hear now through the little round window. The whir of the grindstone as father sharpened an axe under the sweetapple-tree . . . a dog barking his head off somewhere over at Uncle Tom's . . . the west wind rustling in the trembling poplar leaves . . . the saw-wheats calling in

the silver bush--Judy said they were calling for rain . . . Judy's big white gobbler lording it about the yard . . . Uncle Tom's geese talking back and forth to the Silver Bush geese . . . the pigs squealing in their pens . . . even that was pleasant because they were Silver Bush pigs: the Thursday kitten mewing to be let into the granary . . . somebody laughing . . . Winnie, of course. What a pretty laugh Winnie had; and Joe whistling around the barns . . . Joe did whistle so beautifully and half the time didn't know he was whistling. Hadn't he once started to whistle in church? But that was a story for Judy Plum to tell. Judy, take her own word for it, had never been the same again.

The barns where Joe was whistling were near the orchard, with only the Whispering Lane that led to Uncle Tom's between them. The little barn stood close to the big barn like a child . . . such an odd little barn with gables and a tower and oriel windows like a church. Which was exactly what it was. When the new Presbyterian church had been built in South Glen Grandfather Gardiner had bought the old one and hauled it home for a barn. It was the only thing he had ever done of which Judy Plum hadn't approved. It was only what she expected when he had a stroke five years later at the age of seventy-five, and was never the same again though he lived to be eighty. And say what you might there hadn't been the same luck among the Silver Bush pigs after the sty was shifted to the old church. They became subject to rheumatism.

3

The sun had set. Pat always liked to watch its western glory reflected in the windows of Uncle Tom's house beyond the Whispering Lane. It was the hour she liked best of all the

hours on the farm. The poplar leaves were rustling silkily in the afterlight; the yard below was suddenly full of dear, round, fat, furry pussy-cats, bent on making the most of the cat's light. Silver Bush always overflowed with kittens. Nobody ever had the heart to drown them. Pat especially was fond of them. It was a story Judy loved to tell . . . how the minister had told Pat, aged four, that she could ask him any question she liked. Pat had said sadly, "Why don't Gentleman Tom have kittens?" The poor man did be resigning at the next Presbytery. He had a tendency to laughing and he said he couldn't preach wid liddle Pat Gardiner looking at him from her pew, so solemn-like and reproachful.

In the yard were black Sunday, spotted Monday, Maltese Tuesday, yellow Wednesday, calico Friday, Saturday who was just the colour of the twilight. Only striped Thursday continued to wail heart-brokenly at the granary door. Thursday had always been an unsociable kitten, walking by himself like Kipling's cat in Joe's story book. The old gobbler, with his coral-red wattles, had gone to roost on the orchard fence. Bats were swooping about . . . fairies rode on bats, Judy said. Lights were springing up suddenly to east and west . . . at Ned Baker's and Kenneth Robinson's and Duncan Gardiner's and James Adams'. Pat loved to watch them and wonder what was going on in the rooms where they bloomed. But there was one house in which there was never any light . . . an old white house among thick firs on the top of a hill to the south-west, two farms away from Silver Bush. It was a long, rather low house . . . Pat called it the Long Lonely House. It hadn't been lived in for years. Pat always felt so sorry for it, especially in the "dim" when the lights sprang up in all the other houses over the country side. It must feel lonely and neglected. Somehow she resented the fact that it didn't have all that other houses had.

"It wants to be lived in, Judy," she would say wistfully.

There was the evening star in a pale silvery field of sky just over the tall fir tree that shot up in the very centre of the silver bush. The first star always gave her a thrill. Wouldn't it be lovely if she could fly up to that dark swaying fir-top between the evening star and the darkness?

3 - Concerning Parsley Beds

1

The red rose was nearly finished and Pat suddenly remembered that Judy had said something about rooting in the parsley bed.

"Judy Plum," she said, "what do you think you'll find in the parsley bed?"

"What wud ye be after thinking if I told ye I'd find a tiny wee new baby there?" asked Judy, watching her sharply.

Pat looked for a moment as if she had rather had the wind knocked out of her. Then . . .

"Do you think, Judy, that we really need another baby here?"

"Oh, oh, as to that, a body might have her own opinion. But wudn't it be nice now? A house widout a baby do be a lonesome sort av place I'm thinking."

"Would you . . . would you like a baby better than me, Judy Plum?"

There was a tremble in Pat's voice.

"That I wudn't, me jewel. Ye're Judy's girl and Judy's girl ye'll be forever if I was finding a dozen babies in the parsley bed. It do be yer mother I'm thinking av. The fact is, she's got an unaccountable notion for another baby, Patsy, and I'm thinking we must be humouring her a bit, seeing as she isn't extry strong. So there's the truth av the matter for ye."

"Of course, if mother wants a baby I don't mind," conceded Pat. "Only," she added wistfully, "we're such a nice little family now, Judy . . . just mother and daddy and Aunt Hazel and you and Winnie and Joe and Sid and me. I wish we could just stay like that forever."

"I'm not saying it wudn't be best. These afterthoughts do be a bit upsetting whin ye've been thinking a family's finished. But there it is . . . nothing'll do yer mother but a baby. So it's poor Judy Plum must get down on her stiff ould marrow-bones and see what's to be found in the parsley bed."

"Are babies really found in parsley beds, Judy? Jen Foster says the doctor brings them in a black bag. And Ellen Price says a stork brings them. And Polly Gardiner says old Granny Garland from the bridge brings them in her basket."

"The things youngsters do be talking av nowadays," ejaculated Judy. "Ye've seen Dr. Bentley whin he was here be times. Did ye iver see him wid inny black bag?"

"No . . . o . . . o."

"And do there be inny storks on P. E. Island?"

Pat had never heard of any.

"As for Granny Garland, I'm not saying she hasn't a baby or two stowed away in her basket now and again. But if she has ye may rist contint she found it in her own parsley bed. What av that? She doesn't pick the babies for the quality. Ye wudn't want a baby av Granny Garland's choosing, wud ye, now?"

"Oh, no, no. But couldn't I help you look for it, Judy?"

"Listen at her. It's liddle ye know what ye do be talking about, child dear. It's only some one wid a drop av witch blood in her like meself can see the liddle craturs at all. And it's all alone I must go at the rise av the moon, in company wid me cat. 'Tis a solemn performance, I'm telling ye, this finding av babies, and not to be lightly undertaken."

Pat yielded with a sigh of disappointment.

"You'll pick a pretty baby, won't you, Judy? A Silver Bush baby *must* be pretty."

"Oh, oh, I'll do me best. Ye must remimber that none av thim are much to look at in the beginning. All crinkled and wrinkled just like the parsley leaves. And I'm telling ye another thing . . . it's mostly the pretty babies that grow up to be the ugly girls. Whin *I* was a baby . . ."

"Were *you* ever a baby, Judy?" Pat found it hard to believe. It was preposterous to think of Judy Plum ever having been

a baby. And could there ever have been a time when there was *no* Judy Plum?

"I was that. And I was so handsome that the neighbours borryed me to pass off as their own whin company come. And look at me now! Just remimber that if you don't think the baby I'll be finding is as good-looking as ye'd want. Of course I had the jandies whin I was a slip av a girleen. It turned me as yellow as a brass cint. Me complexion was niver the same agin."

"But, Judy, you're not ugly."

"Maybe it's not so bad as that," said Judy cautiously, "but I wudn't have picked *this* face if I cud have had the picking. There now, I've finished me rose and a beauty it is and I must be off to me milking. Ye'd better go and let that Thursday cratur into the granary afore it breaks its heart. And don't be saying a word to inny one about this business av the parsley bed."

"I won't. But, Judy . . . I've a kind of awful feeling in my stomach . . ."

Judy laughed.

"The cliverness av the cratur! I know what ye do be hinting at. Well, after I'm finished wid me cows ye might slip into the kitchen and I'll be frying ye an egg."

"In butter, Judy?"

"Sure in butter. Lashings av it . . . enough to sop yer bits av bread in it the way ye like. And I'm not saying but what there might be a cinnymon bun left over from supper."

Judy, who never wore an apron, turned up her drugget skirt around her waist, showing her striped petticoat, and stalked downstairs, talking to herself as was her habit. Gentleman Tom followed her like a dark familiar. Pat uncoiled herself and went down to let Thursday into the granary. She still had a queer feeling though she could not decide whether it was really in her stomach or not. The world all at once seemed a bit too big. This new baby was an upsetting sort of an idea. The parsley bed had suddenly become a sinister sort of place. For a moment Pat was tempted to go to it and deliberately tear it all up by the roots. Judy wouldn't be able to find a baby in it then. But mother . . . mother wanted a baby. It would never do to disappoint mother.

"But I'll hate it," thought Pat passionately. "An *outsider* like that!"

If she could only talk it over with Sid it would be a comfort. But she had promised Judy not to say a word to anybody about it. It was the first time she had ever had a secret from Sid and it made her feel uncomfortable. Everything seemed to have changed a little in some strange fashion . . . and Pat hated change.

2

Half an hour later she had put the thought of it out of her mind and was in the garden, bidding the flowers goodnight. Pat never omitted this ceremony. She was sure they would miss her if she forgot it. It was so beautiful in the garden, in the late twilight, with a silvery hint of moonrise over the Hill of the Mist. The trees around it . . . old maples that Grandmother Gardiner had planted when she came as a

bride to Silver Bush . . . were talking to each other as they always did at night. Three little birch trees that lived together in one corner were whispering secrets. The big crimson peonies were blots of darkness in the shadows. The blue-bells along the path trembled with fairy laughter. Some late June lilies starred the grass at the foot of the garden: the columbines danced: the white lilac at the gate flung passing breaths of fragrance on the dewy air: the southernwood . . . Judy called it "lad's love" . . . which the little Quaker Great-grand had brought with her from the old land a hundred years ago, was still slyly aromatic.

Pat ran about from plot to plot and kissed everything. Tuesday ran with her and writhed in furry ecstasy on the walks before her . . . walks that Judy had picked off with big stones from the shore, dazzlingly whitewashed.

When Pat had kissed all her flowers good-night she stood for a little while looking at the house. How beautiful it was, nestled against its wooden hill, as if it had grown out of it . . . a house all white and green, just like its own silver birches, and now patterned over charmingly with tree shadows cast by a moon that was floating over the Hill of the Mist. She always loved to stand outside of Silver Bush after dark and look at its lighted windows. There was a light in the kitchen where Sid was at his lessons . . . a light in the parlor where Winnie was practising her music . . . a light up in mother's room. A light for a moment flashed in the hall, as somebody went upstairs, bringing out the fan window over the front door.

"Oh, I've got such a *lovely* home," breathed Pat, clasping her hands. "It's such a nice *friendly* house. Nobody . . . *nobody . . .* has such a lovely home. I'd just like to *hug* it."