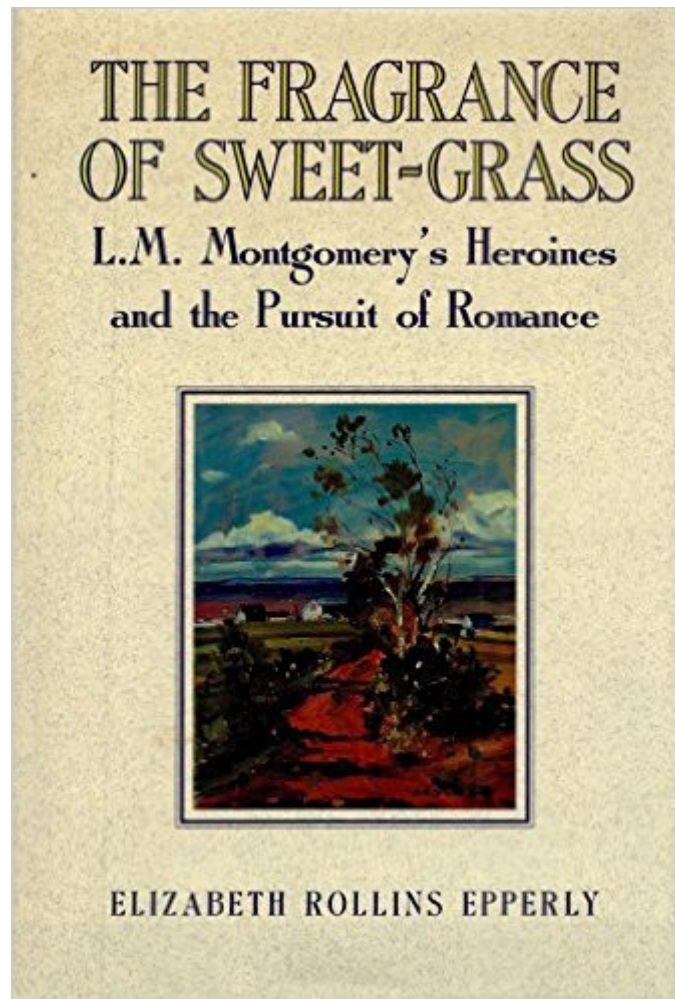


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The Fragrance Of Sweet-Grass: L.M. Montgomery's Heroines And The Pursuit Of Romance



Synopsis

Anne Shirley is the best known of a memorable group of heroines created by Lucy Maud Montgomery, a group that includes Emily Byrd Starr, Valancy Stirling, and Pat Gardiner. These characters are at the centre of Epperly's book, the first full-length critical study of all L.M. Montgomery's fiction. Epperly contends that Montgomery was a master of the romance genre, and through her use of literary allusions, repetitions, irony, and comic inversions she deftly manipulated the normal conventions of romance novels. By studying the fictional biographies of the heroines and their pursuit of romance, Epperly questions the ways romance shapes what we consider valuable in our imaginings and experience. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

"The Fragrance of Sweet Grass: L.M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance" by Elizabeth Rollins Epperly exposes many insights about Montgomery's literary works. Most interestingly, Epperly connects home, self-awareness, and romance. Home is where you discover yourself. Not until this discovery can the heroine go beyond herself to recognize her male counterpart. The heroine establishes herself so she can find a hero equally self-aware. Epperly makes the point that although Montgomery subverts convention by having self-aware, independent women not marry until later in life, they do marry and thus conform to convention. Therefore, Epperly suggests that in the 1990s we may not see Montgomery as a feminist. However, I believe she is wrong. Montgomery is a feminist because her heroines are stongly aware of what they can

do. Montgomery gives them choices of career, family, or both. Epperly gives an excellent analysis of Montgomery's work, although I do not agree with everything she posits. The book is thoughtful and interesting, providing insights for further investigation.

"The Fragrance of Sweet Grass" is Elizabeth Epperly's 1992 exploration of the romantic themes in the novels of Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery. Montgomery was most famous for her "Anne of Green Gables" novels, but she created a number of literary heroines, including Emily of New Moon, Pat of Silver Bush, Valancy Sterling, and the Story Girl, among others. Epperly examines Montgomery's evolving technique, including how romantic choice is dealt with by her heroines, and the author's often subversive narrative with respect to the romantic literary conventions of her day, which called for happy married endings. Epperly considers the Anne novels in the order in which they were written, which leads to some interesting insights about the later appearing novels, such as "Anne of Windy Poplars", in which a mature Montgomery writes about a feisty and independent Anne after college and before her marriage. Of most interest to this reviewer was a discussion of the cautious, even coy approach to Anne Shirley's relationship with Gilbert Blythe in the first three novels, culminating with the wonderful symmetry, and suspense, of "Anne of the Island". Epperly devotes considerable space to "Emily of New Moon" and its two sequels, with its struggling writer heroine, said to be modeled on Montgomery's own early challenges as a writer. "Pat of Silver Bush" is an extended lesson about romance that may be misdirected into a house or place vice a person. "The Fragrance of Sweet Grass" should be a fascinating read for Montgomery fans, even those who don't normally go in for literary criticism. The approach is balanced, and there are many insights for devoted Montgomery fans, to whom this book is highly recommended.

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