

"IT"

And its effect on the pride of the Lesleys

By L. M. MONTGOMERY

Author of "Anne of Green Gables"

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

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

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

The middle white dot was Aunt Zella's house, an unexpected kind of house; like one of those houses in dreams where you are forever discovering new, fascinating rooms; a house where there was red flannel in the lamps, a house with a delightful uncared-for garden where gnarled old apple-trees bent over plots of old-time flowers; thickets of sweet clover, white and fragrant beds of mint and southernwood, honeysuckle and blush roses; and where there was an old mossy path running up to the ivy-grown front door. Oh, Blue Water Beach was a charming spot, and Marigold couldn't eat or sleep properly for a week because of looking forward to her week-end there.

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



Illustrated by Eileen Wedd

Suddenly Aunt Zella bent forward and looked with awful intentness at Marigold's head. An expression of profound horror came into her eyes. She gasped and looked again.

proffered a peck on the cheek. Marigold was hungry and the supper looked simply gorgeous. Nancy was smiling happily and significantly at her across the table, as if to say, "Just wait till we get to bed. I've heaps to tell you."

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

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

"Im-possible," said Cousin Teresa. "See for yourself," said Aunt Zella. Cousin Teresa rose and came around the table to the petrified Marigold who was just realizing that something perfectly awful had happened, but couldn't imagine what. "Oh, dear me," wailed Cousin Teresa. "What can we do? What can we do?" Cousin Teresa did something. Marigold felt a light touch on her head. Cousin Teresa dashed out of the room and came back a moment later looking ready to faint. "Do you suppose—there are any more?" demanded Aunt Zella hollowly.

"I don't see any more," said Cousin Teresa.

Beulah was snickering. Nancy was wireless sympathy. "What is the matter with me?" cried Marigold. No attention was paid to her.

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

Aunt Zella shook her head forcibly. "No—never was. There has never been any need of one here, thank Heaven."

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

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

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

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

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

Marigold did not want cake or cookie. She wanted to know what was the matter with her. She dared not ask Aunt Zella, but she indignantly demanded of Cousin Teresa on the stairs what she had done to be put away like this with such scorn and contumely. (Continued on page 56)

had passed, of course. There were so many things in the world to smile at.

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

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

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

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



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"It"

(Continued from page 21)

Marigold didn't use those words but she felt them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"And Dan," continued Cousin Teresa. "Remember Dan?"

"A boy is different. And, besides, you know how Dan turned out," said Aunt Zella. How had Dan turned out? Marigold felt as if she would give anything to know.

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

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

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

"No, no; she can't sleep there. I'd never feel sure of the bed again. We must put her in Annabel's room."

"But Annabel died there," objected Cousin Teresa.

"Marigold doesn't know that," said Aunt Zella.

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

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

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

Them! Marigold had a flash of awful illumination. Germs, of course. Those mysterious, terrible things she had heard Aunt Marigold speak of. She was—what was it? Oh, yes—a germ-carrier. Germs that per-

haps she would never get rid of. She must be an outcast all her life!

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

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

"I don't care if you have got them—I love you just the same," said Nancy loyally.

"Nancy Walker! You come right out of there," said Beulah's sharp voice from the door.

"Aunt Zella said you weren't to go near her."

Nancy went out, crying.

"Oh, I'm sorry for you," said Beulah before she turned away.

The city of Beulah was wormwood and gall. Marigold went dully to Annabel's room, where the bed had already been stripped to the springs. She could see Cousin Teresa busy over tubs in the wash-house. Nancy was carrying a great sheaf of mauve and gold irises across the road to the Johnson's, to help decorate for the party.

Away across the harbor was a soft blur that was Cloud of Pines—dear Cloud of Pines, dear home. If she were only there! But Aunt Zella had told her they could not take her home until after the party. A fog was creeping up to Blue Water Beach. It crept on and on, it blotted out the harbor, it blotted out the distant shore of Cloud of Pines, it blotted out the world. She was alone in the universe with her terrible, mysterious shame. Marigold Lesley's spirit failed her at last. She broke down and cried.

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

Cousin Teresa was wailing nervously to Grandmother.

"Impossible," said Grandmother peevishly.

"We found one," said Cousin Teresa positively.

One what? Oh, if Marigold only knew what.

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

"Have you—a comb?" whispered Cousin Teresa.

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

"No results," she said crisply. "I believe Zella simply imagined it."

"I saw it myself," said Cousin Teresa a trifle shrewdly. She drove away a little offended. Marigold sat down disconsolately on the verandah steps. She dared not ask Grandmother anything. Grandmother was annoyed, and when Grandmother was annoyed she was very aloof. Moreover, she

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Shopping at home

"My dear! What a smart dress. Where did you get it?"

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

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

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

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

Aunt Marigold stared.

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

Marigold nodded, her eyes full of tears.

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

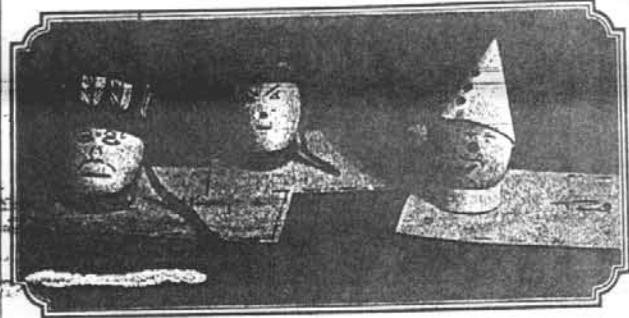
Aunt Marigold very gently explained. "It's apt to happen to any child who goes to school," she concluded comfortingly.

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

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

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

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



An Indian, a Chinaman and a clown, made of egg shells and doing duty as place-card decoration.

The Personal Note in Easter Eggs

(Continued from page 28)

down. What was the bottom now becomes the top, and we shall so speak of it in future. Cover the sides and top of the box with gray paper to represent stone or with red paper to represent brickwork. This is the wall on which Humpty-Dumpty sat. Or draw lines on the sides to indicate the divisions between the blocks of stone which make up the wall. These may be about two inches long and an inch thick; for bricks, they should be smaller, of course. The top of the box shows one layer of stone blocks or two of brick. Lay this aside and proceed to the making of the figure of Humpty-Dumpty himself.

Draw an egg-shaped figure on a piece of fairly heavy bristol-board or a fine grade of cardboard. This should be roughly 3 1/2 inches wide and 4 1/2 inches long, except for the fact that there is an addition to the pointed end of the egg in the shape of a tab 1 inch long and 1/2 an inch wide. Your actual form then is an egg with a little tab on it. These 1/2-inch wide tabs fit into slots cut into the top of the box, one in the middle of each side, about 1/2 an inch back from the edge of the wall. In cutting these slots be sure to hold the knife perfectly upright to ensure the figures holding the correct position.

Now for his body, arms and legs. First of all, we have to make a paper pattern. To do this, lay the cardboard egg with its lower part on a sheet of paper in such a way that a little less than 1/2 of the egg lies on the paper. Trace the outline of this lower part of the egg, omitting the tab, and remove the cardboard egg. Now mark a point 1/4 of an inch down from the edge of the paper on the outline. Here, draw one arm, 1/2 of an inch wide, with a bend inward at the elbow. Each joint of the arm should measure about an inch.

Following the outline 1/4 of an inch farther down, draw the leg, which should be

about an inch wide at the point where it joins the body. The leg should be something like 3 1/2 inches long, with a somewhat bowlegged appearance, and with the feet protruding at a slightly ungainly angle. Double your paper lengthwise down the middle of the figure and cut it out with a pair of scissors.

Lay your paper pattern on a piece of colored felt, flannel, broadcloth or any heavy material which will not fray. Cut out two suits for each figure, making eight in all. The upper margin of each suit should have a slight inward curve to heighten the impression of roundness in the finished product. The suits may be of materials of different colors to add variety, though the pair cut for each figure should be of the same color.

Now lay these on one side and draw the faces on the upper parts of the cardboard eggs, being careful that they will not be covered by the clothing which is to be added later. The preliminary drawing may be done on a separate sheet of paper in pencil. Trace this on to the four eggs and go over them in India ink.

Fit the clothing carefully to the allotted place on the egg. In the piece of material which is to be in front, cut a small notch in the middle of the upper edge to indicate and allow for the opening of the collar which is to be added later. Paste the two pieces of felt into position, with the cardboard egg carefully adjusted between them. Arms and legs are pasted together, after inserting little hands cut out of cardboard. Lines are drawn on these to indicate fingers, without any too great care for exactitude. To the feet may be added roughly shaped shoes in material of a contrasting color.

Now add the collar which is cut with the same curve as was the top of the clothing, and is 1/4 of an inch wide. White paper of a fairly heavy grade is suitable for this. The



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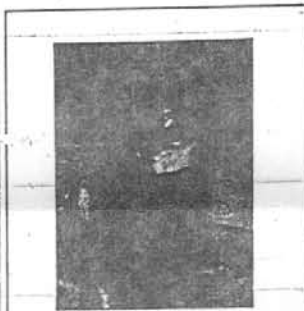
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