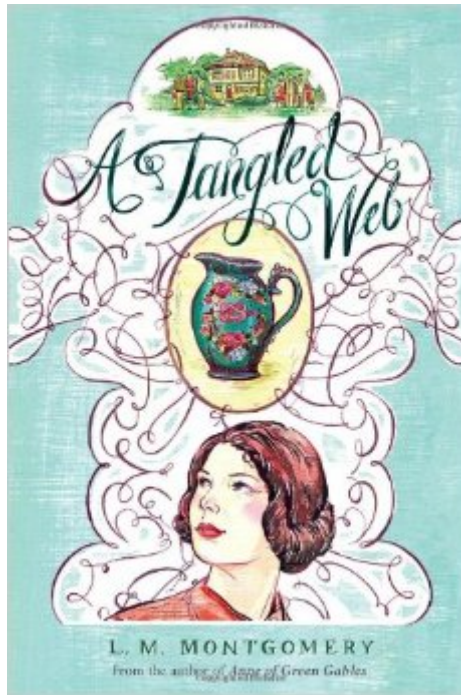


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A Tangled Web



Synopsis

It's the Dark family vs. the Penhallows in this daring and witty, sarcastic and sentimental novel by the author of *Anne of Green Gables*. *What Will Two Feuding Families Do To Win?* It all begins with Great Aunt Becky and her infamous prized possession: a legendary heirloom jug. After her death, everyone wants it. But the new owner won't be named for one year... *Anything It Takes* Mayhem reigns and tables are turned in a year when everything feels topsy-turvy. One woman will lose her fiancé. Two enemies since childhood will inexplicably come together. And a couple mysteriously separated on their wedding night ten years before will find a second chance at love. Then comes the night when Aunt Becky's wishes will be revealed...and the family is in for the biggest surprise of all. What Readers are Saying: "Next to *Anne of Green Gables*, [it's] one of the books I've re-read the most times. I've always loved this and considered it the best of Montgomery's standalone books." "Superb. Absolutely superb. The characters live and step right off the page, leaving me thinking about them after I've closed the book." "Classic L.M. Montgomery. Lots of fun characters doing crazy things and then gossiping about it to anyone who will listen. Loved it!"

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

LMM's gift for portraying people's hopes and dreams and shortcomings in a sympathetic fashion shines in this novel. Among her most unique stories in format, it chooses to follow the fates of an entire clan for a year, alternately "peeping in" on the thoughts of first one person and then another. In most of her novels we see everyone through the lens of the main character: here we see each of them as they see themselves. The characters' actions and decisions are shadowed by either their

own, or their loved ones' desire to win possession of a coveted family jug. And although there is only one jug, the impetus to change and improve their lives results in nearly everyone being happy at the end of the story. LMM is as usual able to evoke both the comical and the noble side of her characters, all the while telling a good story. In feel and in setting this novel is very typical of LMM's work; the delightful characters and small-town politics will be familiar to anybody who loves her writing. It stands out from her other works because of the multiplicity of characters and storylines. Over the years this has become one of my favourite LMM novels. I would especially recommend it to any adults reading her books for the first time.

When I need to be cheered up, I re-read the first two chapters of this book and end up reading the whole book over, enthralled by one or another of the stories. The web may be tangled, but who cares when it's so fun? Montgomery's trademark moments - the ones you keep reading the Anne or Emily series for - pop up all the time, and as usual you keep kicking yourself for forgetting that her characters aren't real. Poignant, mysterious, romantic, Avonleaish, and VERY funny - watch out for the Sams, Uncle Pippen, Peter P., and of course Drowned John (I'd buy the book just to read the explanation of that name!)

This book along with *Blue Castle* is tied for my favorite L.M. Montgomery book. The old aunt is hilarious. Other characters are original and generally sympathetic. Everyone will be able to say "I have a relative just like that". Overall, a sweet, romantic, humorous book with a happy ending.

Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery, justly famous for her "Anne of Green Gables" series, wrote two novels in her career that were explicitly intended for adults. One is her highly entertaining 1931 classic "A Tangled Web." Set on Montgomery's beloved Prince Edward Island, the novel concerns two intermarried clans, the Darks and the Penhallows, whose collective lives are thrown into chaos by the dying wish of matriarch Aunt Becky Dark. The clever and meddling Aunt Becky leaves a valued heirloom jug to be awarded to the most deserving clan member one year after her death. The premise may seem a little weak, but Montgomery adroitly uses it as a vehicle to explore the foibles, weaknesses, rivalries and eccentricities of a small town, in the process finding much humor and some considerable human wisdom. The race for the jug will prompt the Darks and the Penhallows to examine their lives, with unexpected results. Men and women who have quarreled all their lives will try to be polite for one year. An estranged couple will attempt to heal their marriage. A young woman in love will compete for the man of her choice, before pondering the wisdom of her

choice. A spinster will be offered marriage and a home by a man she has decidedly mixed feelings about. A man and a woman who hate each other will suddenly wonder why. A cruelly abused orphan will find happiness in an unexpected way. In a sense, "A Tangled Web" is a clever intermingling of a series of short stories with predictable outcomes, but Montgomery's ability to make the most of the journey carries it off in superb style. "A Tangled Web" is very highly recommended to her fans.

An old jug left in secret legacy by a mischievous and temperamental old aunt: who knew that the inheritance of such a trivial (and undeniably ugly) object could lead to such drastic repercussions! Shattered friendships, broken hearts, rekindled romance...the Dark and Penhallow families experience them all and more when the clan matriarch, Aunt Becky, dies after her final "levee" during which she blistered each and every one of them with her tongue and started the kettle of emotions boiling with her unusual will and bequests. Following the funeral, Big Sam and Little Sam, friends for ages, suddenly find that they cannot stand each other's company...but can they learn to live apart? Beautiful Gay Penhallow, whose young heart is in raptures over her recent engagement, learns the painful lesson of the meaning of true love, as does Joscelyn Dark, who has spurned her husband for ten long years in order to remain true to her heart's desire. Brian Dark and Margaret Penhallow, each longing desperately for love and home, finally find solace for their aching hearts just as do Peter Penhallow and Donna Dark, longtime enemies who suddenly find in each other the lover they've been unconsciously searching for. In the year that follows Aunt Becky's death, until the day her secret is finally revealed, these and many other lives will be drastically changed. Just how much damage will the old jug do to this family and will its members survive the change? This is a charming book set in Lucy Maud Montgomery's beloved Prince Edward Island. Its colorful characters, descriptive scenery and interesting plot that employs a mixture of humor, pathos and sweet sentiment make for a comfortable read that leaves behind a pleasant sense of satisfaction at its close. Though I would certainly recommend that readers new to L.M. Montgomery's books read her more popular Avonlea books first, this was an enjoyable book and well worth the time spent.

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