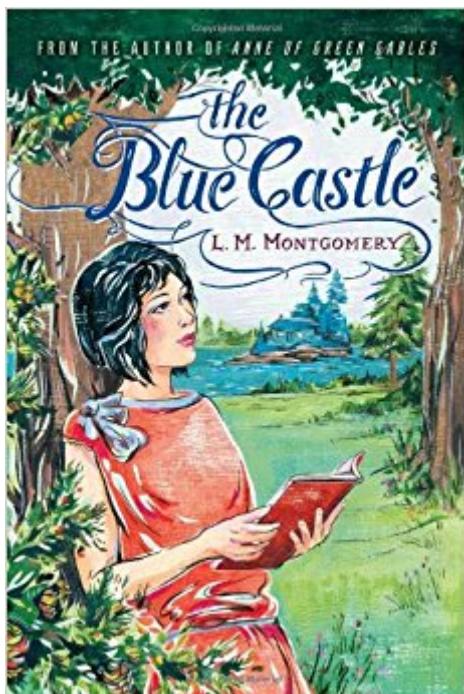


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# The Blue Castle



## Synopsis

What Readers Are Saying: "The sweetest romance I have ever read, full of laugh-out-loud moments and obnoxious 'villains'...on par with Jane Austen's best." An unforgettable story of courage and romance. Will Valancy Stirling ever escape her strict family and find true love? All her life, Valancy Stirling lived on a quiet little street in an ugly little house and never dared to contradict her domineering mother and her unforgiving aunt. Then she gets a letter and decides that very day things need to change. For the first time in her life, she does exactly what she wants to and says exactly what she feels. At first her family thinks she's gone around the bend. But soon Valancy discovers more surprises and adventure than she ever thought possible. She also finds her one true love and the real-life version of the Blue Castle that she was sure only existed in her dreams...What Readers are Saying:"This just became one of my all-time favorites! In fact, this may be my favorite L.M. Montgomery book, and I'm a huge 'Anne' fan!...I loved the drama and the romance, and the beautiful descriptions of the Canadian wilds. What a great book! It's a treat to read, just a joy with every page!""The sweetest romance I have ever read, full of laugh-out-loud moments and obnoxious 'villains'...on par with Jane Austen's best." "Absolutely hilarious (Valancy would be a Twitter superstar), and it feels so fresh, which is a testament to how timeless L.M. Montgomery's writing is. This has quickly become one of my favorite books." "I finished reading The Blue Castle with the same engrossed delight I had in meeting Anne Shirley years ago."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Montgomery writes beautifully and brings tears of both sorrow and joy on the turning of every

page."ÃÃ¢â¬â¬Guardian --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

At twenty-nine Valancy had never been in love, and it seemed romance had passed her by. Living with her overbearing mother and meddlesome aunt, she found her only consolations in the "forbidden" books of John Foster and her daydreams of the Blue Castle. Then a letter arrived from Dr. Trent -- and Valancy decided to throw caution to the winds. For the first time in her life Valancy did and said exactly what she wanted. Soon she discovered a surprising new world, full of love and adventures far beyond her most secret dreams. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This was such a great story on so many levels. I don't know why, but my heart is still feeling stirred a little. At first, I thought I would go nuts reading about how boring, boring, boring, dull, dull, dull Valancy Stirling's 29 years of life had been. To this end, the reader is enlightened for the first 20% of the book - I kept checking my Kindle and thought if it went beyond 25% I might just forget the book, or at least jump forward to some action. At just about the 22% spot, Valancy, who up until that point, was a dull girl who had given over to allowing her life to be utterly ruled by a family who constantly put her down, had treated her unfairly, even to the point of occasionally mocking her spinsterhood and so on. Ugh. Valancy's only true delight is reading books by naturalist John Foster, but even these books are frowned upon by her strict mother. In order to escape the boredom of her dull life, she has created her own world which she calls "The Blue Castle." When she is finally alone in her room, she can escape into that world where she is a lovely lady who lives in splendor in her castle in the mountains. When Valancy begins to feel some heart pains, she finally has the courage to go a doctor on the sly and find out why she is having these difficulties. His answer via letter causes her to have the courage to decide she will no longer be the passive, dull dog she has been in the past. When she finds out a childhood friend is suffering from TB and has nobody to care for her but her rough, often drunk alcoholic father - Roaring Abel, Valancy decides she will take up the post. While living with this disreputable family, she also comes in frequent contact with outcast Barney Snaith, an individual who is rumored to be a kind of blackguard, forger, ruiner of women, counterfeiter, illegitimate son of Roarin' Abel, and so forth. Barney lives in the wild splendor of "up back" Muskoka and is often seen driving fast on the road that runs through Valancy's home town of Deerwood in his old beat up vehicle. At some point in time, Valancy decides she knows one thing. She loves Barney with all her heart. When Valancy's childhood friend passes, she knows she will have to leave and return home - then she has an idea. She lets Barney Snaith read the letter from the doctor and then asks Barney if he will marry her - he says yes, but makes it clear she must not expect love from him.

Within a couple of days, she's married to Barney and they set out for his home in Muskoka. To Valancy's delight, she recognizes Barney's simple home, set in the midst of splendor in the beautiful mountainous area as the real life rendition of her Blue Castle. Barney and Valancy live in near solitude in their simple home with occasional forays into town either by boat, by car, on foot or - in the winter, they can skate across the lake. They truly love the companionship and no stifling demands are made upon one another. For Valancy's part, she's happier than she's ever been in her life, even though it's obvious from the outset Barney has some secrets he is unwilling to share. Barney never confesses love for Valancy, but does show a tremendous amount of affection. Months go by and then a couple of happenings contribute to unexpected stress in their lives. In the end, we learn some truths that are wonderfully revealed and of course, it's a kind of fairy tale love story - how could it not be with the name of the book. Sweet, sweet story of two souls who lived and loved in the scenic area of Muskoka (Ontario, Canada) who find their Blue Castle and their HEA.

My very favorite book of all time. I first discovered L.M. Montgomery's The Blue Castle when I was not quite a teen. As such, I could easily identify with Valancy and how she escaped the trials that were her family by visiting her imaginary Blue Castle. I was excited to find this work in Kindle format, and for the first time in close to fifty years, my annual reading has not been from my yellowing paged blue volume, but on my Kindle. Thank you!

To any reading this who do not know, Being alone is a terrible prospect. Having no one to claim you as solely their own and having no one to claim as yours is a certain misery that Montgomery captured in its fullest heartbreak. I was not a full two chapters into this lovely story before I was in tears. I was not three chapters in before I was laughing out loud. Watching Valancy morph from timid, shrinking obscurity to bold, striking infamy was quite the pleasure. I can assure you that you have chosen her most mature and straightforward work to read. Montgomery, famous for her meandering descriptions, does not disappoint. Though, she does not linger as long as she was wont to do in her earlier work, she captures the resplendence of nature in a more adult fashion without excessive verbosity. She gently and humorously deals with Valancy's follies and sorrows. In a more direct tone, as if Montgomery is tired from all the wordiness of youth, she broaches the pangs of spinstership and the quiet death of prim living. She allows the reader to grow into the knowledge of the character's life and to push against the restraints that Valancy enforced upon herself. The reader feels as though they are making the decisions with Valancy, for who would not do some of the things she does? This story is marvelous and worth the read. I now will forever list it among my

favorites and give it a place of highest honor on my shelves.

Valency has grown up timid and repressed by an overbearing family, in a society where a woman's identity is determined by her marital status. At 29, Valency has never had a beau and is too intimidated by her mother to assert her personality or taste in any aspect of her own life - she can't choose her own clothes or decorate her own bedroom, and she wakes up on her 29th birthday in despair, realizing she has no happy memories to look back upon and nothing to look forward to. Then on her 29th birthday she makes an unusual, seemingly minor strike at independence - she goes to the doctor all by herself, because she has heart palpitations. On the same day, she reads a line by her favorite author, warning against living in fear. And when the doctor informs her she has one year to live, she suddenly feels liberated of fear and decides to live her last year on her own terms. Valency's family are deeply alarmed when her personality suddenly transforms and she starts saying what she thinks, and refusing to let them belittle or shame her. She then embarks on a delayed adolescence, moving out of home, experimenting with clothes and a new social life. Her first independent move is actually quite practical and responsible, but her second step would admittedly worry any family member. It was a liberating, heartwarming journey to explore Valency's "last year" with her, as she learns about love, friendship and discovers a wider view of the good and bad of the world. Valency is not a modern day heroine, in that she doesn't waste time talking about what she's learned about herself, but readers will be inspired to see that the new Valency is resourceful and practical, passionate and honest. If you skipped The Blue Castle during your childhood with Anne and Emily, read about Valency now - she is the adult version of LM Montgomery heroines.

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