



Puffin to publish prequel to international bestselling classic *Anne of Green Gables*

To coincide with the centenary anniversary in 2007 of L. M. Montgomery's classic children's book *Anne of Green Gables* Puffin is to publish the first ever officially sanctioned prequel to the story, *Before Green Gables*, by award-winning Canadian author Budge Wilson.

Anne of Green Gables is Canada's most successful literary export. A true classic, it has sold 50 million copies worldwide and been translated into over twenty languages. It has also inspired numerous film and television adaptations and even a Japanese Manga anime. The book inspires incredible loyalty – there are 161 groups dedicated to it on Facebook, some with around a thousand members.

The prequel tells the story of Anne's parents' death from illness when she was just three months old, and how the young Anne was passed from foster home to foster home, often looking after other people's children when she was just a child herself. Wilson also shows how Anne develops her love of words and literature, the roots of her famous imagination and how she learnt to seek out 'kindred spirits' even in the most desperate of times. *Before Green Gables* glories in the nature and beauty of Wilson's native Nova Scotia just as *Anne of Green Gables* revelled in that of Montgomery's home - Prince Edward Island.

Budge Wilson says:

'I will, of course, try to be true to the astonishing character that Lucy Maud Montgomery created... But I would not – in fact, could not – presume to tell my part of Anne's history in Montgomery's voice. I will do this in my own voice, hoping that she would approve of the project if she were alive today.'

One of Canada's most acclaimed authors for young people, Wilson has published 29 books in more than 10 countries, and won over 25 awards. She studied at the same college as L. M. Montgomery and recent research revealed that Wilson and Montgomery may well have even lived in the same dorm room, many years apart, at Halifax Ladies College.