



# Kit Pearson

# The Perfect Gentle Knight

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## About the Author

I was born in Edmonton, Alberta on April 30, 1947 and lived there for the first eight years of my life with my parents and my two younger brothers. During those years, I reveled in the snowy winters, blissful summers spent on a lake outside of Edmonton, peaceful Sunday afternoons at my beloved grandparents' house, many family dogs, and my imagination. I was lucky to be read to often, and at age six I became an avid reader myself, which greatly enriched the pretending games I was always playing. When I was eight, my family moved to Vancouver. We lived there for four happy years.

At thirteen, my family moved back to Edmonton. It was there I began to keep a journal. I eventually went back to Vancouver to attend high school and then returned to Edmonton for university. After receiving my library degree from UBC, I worked in Ontario, where I discovered my Loyalist ancestors had lived! Then I worked for four busy years as a children's librarian in Toronto.

I yearned to write, so I took a year off to get an M.A. in Children's Literature. I moved back to Vancouver, found a part-time library job, and began my first children's novel, *The Daring Game*.

### How the Author Began Writing

When I was thirteen my family moved back to Edmonton. I was devastated. After reading *Emily of New Moon*, I began to keep a journal. Although I still imagined stories all the time, I never wrote them down.

For high school I was sent back to Vancouver to a boarding school for girls called Crofton House School. I made many friends and discovered the deep pleasures of English literature. I decided to major in English at the University of British Columbia. After a year, I went back to Alberta for the rest of my degree. Even though I loved my English classes, I still wasn't writing anything of my own, except my journal. Sometimes, I would try to begin a novel but I had no idea how to continue. I had vague ideas about becoming a librarian, not yet brave enough to try writing.

Finally, in 1975, I went back to UBC for my library degree. After working for few years, I went back to school for an M.A, found inspiration, and with the help of my grandmother's inheritance, settled down in Vancouver to write.



## About the Book

It is 1957 and the six children in the Bell family are struggling to cope after their mother's death. Because their father has retreated into his books and his teaching, the older children try to run the family. The eldest, Sebastian, has begun the game of Knights of the Round Table, which at first they all find a comforting escape. But the safety of the game is threatened when Roz, the second eldest, begins to be more interested in junior high school than pretending. The main character of the book, eleven-year-old Corrie, feels increasingly torn between being loyal to Sebastian and the Round Table and to her new friend Meredith. When Sebastian seems unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality, Corrie tries desperately to hold her family together.

### Author's

#### Writing Tip:

##### **Read, read and read!**

The more you read, the more natural writing will be for you.

Enjoy what you write and don't worry about whether it's good or complete.

Keeping a journal - not the kind where you write every day, but the kind where you write what you want, when you want - is great practice.

If you're serious, you'll have to learn grammar and punctuation.

Two books I highly recommend for this are *The Elements of Style* and *Eats, Shoots, and Leaves*.



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### The Inspiration Behind the Book

When I moved to Edmonton at age twelve, I was devastated at losing not only my friends but the games we played. I tried to pretend by myself but it wasn't nearly as engrossing. Of course I was becoming too old to pretend, but I had a very hard time accepting this. As the Bronte sisters did in their complicated games, I found these fantasy worlds both enriching and dangerous. Pretending to be different characters certainly developed my imagination and helped me create characters when I became a writer. But the games were so alluring that it was difficult to let them go and live in the real world.

In this novel, I tried to show both the power and the danger of imagination. At first playing knights is a comfort for the grief-stricken Bell family, but eventually the three older ones have to give up the game to grow.

I set this book in the 1950s because it was much more common for children to play pretending games then. I really enjoyed remembering that innocent time!

### Other Books by the Author

*The Daring Game*

*A Handful of Time*

The Guests of War Trilogy