









A · LITTLE · GIRL  
IN · OLD · BOSTON



AMANDA · M  
DOUGLAS



# A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD BOSTON

By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS

## SALLIE BUFFUM:

To you, who have been a little girl in later Boston, I inscribe this story of another little girl who lived almost a hundred years ago, and found life busy and pleasant and full of affection, as I hope it will prove to you.

Amanda M. Douglas.  
Newark, N. J., 1898.



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# A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD BOSTON

## CHAPTER I

### DORIS

"I do suppose she is a Papist! The French generally are," said Aunt Priscilla, drawing her brows in a delicate sort of frown, and sipping her tea with a spoon that had the London crown mark, and had been buried early in revolutionary times.

"Why, there were all the Huguenots who emigrated from France for the sake of worshiping God in their own way rather than that of the Pope. We Puritans did not take all the free-will," declared Betty spiritedly.

"You are too flippant, Betty," returned Aunt Priscilla severely. "And I doubt if her father's people had much experimental religion. Then, she has been living in a very hot-bed of superstition!"

"The cold, dreary Lincolnshire coast! I think it would take a good deal of zeal to warm me, even if it was superstition."

"And she was in a convent after her mother died! Yes, she is pretty sure to be a Papist. It seems rather queer that second-cousin Charles should have remembered her in his will."

"But Charles was his namesake and nephew, the child of his favorite sister," interposed Mrs. Leverett, glancing deprecatingly at Betty, pleading with the most beseeching eyes that she should not ruffle Aunt Priscilla up the wrong way.

"But what is that old ma'shland good for, anyway?" asked Aunt Priscilla.

"Why they are filling in and building docks," said Betty the irrepressible. "Father thinks by the time she is grown it will be a handsome fortune."

Aunt Priscilla gave a queer sound that was not a sniff, but had a downward tendency, as if it was formed of inharmonious consonants. It expressed both doubt and disapproval.

"But think of the expense and the taxes! You can't put a bit of improvement on anything but the taxes eat it up. I want my hall door painted, and the cornishes,"—Aunt Priscilla always would pronounce it that way,— "but I mean to wait until the assessor has been round. It's the best time to paint in cool weather, too. I can't afford to pay a man for painting and then pay the city for the privilege."

No one controverted Mrs. Perkins. She broke off her bread in bits and sipped her tea.

"Why didn't they give her some kind of a Christian name?" she began suddenly. "Don't you suppose it is French for the plain, old-fashioned, sensible name of Dorothy?"

Betty laughed. "Oh, Aunt Priscilla, it's pure Greek. Doris and Phyllis and Chloe—"

"Phyllis and Chloe are regular nigger names," with the utmost disdain.

"But Greek, all the same. Ask Uncle Winthrop."

"Well, I shall call her Dorothy. I'm neither Greek nor Latin nor a college professor. There's no law against my being sensible, fursisee"—which really meant "far as I see." "And the idea of appointing Winthrop Adams her guardian! I did think second-cousin Charles had more sense. Winthrop thinks of nothing but books and going back to the Creation of the World, just as if the Lord couldn't have made things straight in the beginning without his help. I dare say he will find out what language they talked before the dispersion of Babel. People are growing so wise nowadays, turning the Bible inside out!" and she gave her characteristic sniff. "I'll have another cup of tea, Elizabeth. Now that we're through with the war, and settled solid-like with a President at the helm, we can look forward to something permanent, and comfort ourselves that it was worth trying for. Still, I've often thought of that awful waste of tea in Boston harbor. Seems as though they might have done something else with it. Tea will keep a good long while. And all that wretched stuff we used to drink and call it Liberty tea!"

"I don't know as we regret many of the sacrifices, though it came harder on the older people. We have a good deal to be proud of," said Mrs. Leverett.

"And a grandfather who was at Bunker Hill," appended Betty.

Aunt Priscilla never quite knew where she belonged. She had come over with the Puritans, at least her ancestors had, but then there had been a title in the English branch; and though she scoffed a little, she had great respect for royalty, and secretly regretted they had not called the head of the government by a more dignified appellation than President. Her mother had been a Church of England member, but rather austere Mr. Adams believed that wives were to submit themselves to their husbands in matters of belief as well as aught else. Then Priscilla Adams, at the age of nineteen, had wedded the man of her father's choice, Hatfield Perkins, who was a staunch upholder of the Puritan faith. Priscilla would have enjoyed a little foolish love-making, and she had a carnal hankering for fine gowns; and, oh, how she did long to dance in her youth, when she was slim and light-footed!

In spite of all, she had been a true Puritan outwardly, and had a little misgiving that the prayers of the Church were vain repetitions, the organ wickedly frivolous, and the ringing of bells suggestive of popery. There had been no children, and a bad fall had lamed her husband so that volunteering for a soldier was out of the question, but he had assisted with his means; and some twelve years before this left his widow in comfortable circumstances for the times.

She kept to her plain dress, although it was rich; and her housemaid was an elderly black woman who had been a slave in her childhood. She devoted a good deal of thought as to who should inherit her property when she was done with it. For those she held in the highest esteem were elderly like herself, and the young people were flighty and extravagant and despised the good old ways of prudence and thrift.

They were having early tea at Mrs. Leverett's. Aunt Priscilla's mother had been half-sister to Mrs. Leverett's mother. In the old days of large families nearly everyone came to be related. It was always very cozy in Sudbury Street, and Foster Leverett was in the ship chandlery trade. Aunt Priscilla *did* love a good cup of tea. Whether the quality was finer, or there was some peculiar art in brewing it, she could never quite decide; or whether the social

cream of gentle Elizabeth Leverett, and the spice of Betty, added to the taste and heightened the flavor beyond her solitary cup.

Early October had already brought chilling airs when evening set in. A century or so ago autumn had the sharpness of coming winter in the early morning and after sundown. There was a cheerful wood fire on the hearth, and its blaze lighted the room sufficiently, as the red light of the sunset poured through a large double window.

The house had a wide hall through the center that was really the keeping-room. The chimney stood about halfway down, a great stone affair built out in the room, tiled about with Scriptural scenes, with two tiers of shelves above, whereon were ranged the family heirlooms—so high, indeed, that a stool had to be used to stand on when they were dusted. Just below this began a winding staircase with carved spindles and a mahogany rail and newel, considered quite an extravagance in that day.

This lower end was the living part. In one of the corners was built the buffet, while a door opposite led into the wide kitchen. Across the back was a porch where shutters were hung in the winter to keep out the cold.

The great dining table was pushed up against the wall. The round tea table was set out and the three ladies were having their tea, quite a common custom when there was a visitor, as the men folk were late coming in and a little uncertain.

On one side the hall opened in two large, well-appointed rooms. On the other were the kitchen and "mother's room," where, when the children were little, there had been a cradle and a trundle bed. But one son and two daughters were married; one son was in his father's warehouse, and was now about twenty; the next baby boy had died; and Betty, the youngest, was sixteen, pretty, and a little spoiled, of course. Yet Aunt Priscilla had a curious fondness for her, which she insisted to herself was very reprehensible, since Betty was such a feather-brained girl.

"It is to be hoped the ship did get in to-day," Aunt Priscilla began presently. "If there's anything I hate, it's being on tenterhooks."

"She was spoken this morning. There's always more or less delay with pilots and tides and what not," replied Mrs. Leverett.

"The idea of sending a child like that alone! The weather has been fine, but we don't know how it was on the ocean."

"Captain Grier is a friend of Uncle Win's, you know," appended Betty.

"Betty, do try and call your relatives by their proper names. An elderly man, too! It does sound so disrespectful! Young folks of today seem to have no regard for what is due other people. Oh — —"

There was a kind of stamping and shuffling on the porch, and the door was flung open, letting in a gust of autumnal air full of spicy odors from the trees and vines outside. Betty sprang up, while her mother followed more slowly. There were her father and her brother Warren, and the latter had by the hand the little girl who had crossed the ocean to come to the famous city of the New World, Boston. Almost two hundred years before an ancestor had crossed from old Boston, in the ship *Arabella*, and settled here, taking his share of pilgrim hardships. Doris' father, when a boy, had been sent back to England to be adopted as the heir of a long line. But the old relative married and had two sons of his own, though he did well by the boy, who went to France and married a pretty French girl. After seven years of unbroken happiness the sweet young wife had died. Then little Doris, six years of age, had spent two years in a convent. From there her father had taken her to Lincolnshire and placed her with two elderly relatives, while he was planning and arranging his affairs to come back to America with his little daughter. But one night, being out with a sailing party, a sudden storm had caught them and swept them out of life in an instant.

Second-cousin Charles Adams had been in correspondence with him, and advised him to return. Being in feeble health, he had included him and his heirs in his will, appointing his nephew Winthrop Adams executor, and died before the news of the death of his distant relative had reached him. The Lincolnshire ladies were too old to have the care and rearing of a child, so Mr. Winthrop Adams had sent by Captain Grier to bring over the little girl. Her father's estate, not very large, was in money and easily managed. And now little Doris was nearing ten.

"Oh!" cried Betty, hugging the slim figure in the red camlet cloak, and peering into the queer big hat tied down over her ears with

broad ribbons that, what with the big bow and the wide rim, almost hid her face; but she saw two soft lovely eyes and cherry-red lips that she kissed at once, though kissing had not come in fashion to any great extent, and was still considered by many people rather dubious if not positively sinful.

"Oh, little Doris, welcome to Boston and the United Colonies and the whole of America! Let me see how you look," and she untied the wide strings.

The head that emerged was covered with fair curling hair; the complexion was clear, but a little wind-burned from her long trip; the eyes were very dark, but of the deepest, softest blue, that suggested twilight. There was a dimple in the dainty chin, and the mouth had a half-frightened, half-wistful smile.

"Captain Grier will send up her boxes to-morrow. They got aground and were delayed. I began to think they would have to stay out all night. The captain will bring up a lot of papers for Winthrop, and everything," explained Mr. Leverett. "Are you cold, little one?"

Doris gave a great shiver as her cloak was taken off, but it was more nervousness than cold, and the glances of the strange faces. Then she walked straight to the fireplace.

"Oh, what a beautiful fire!" she exclaimed. "No, I am not cold" – and the wistful expression wandered from one to the other.

"This is my daughter Betty, and this is – why, you may as well begin by saying Aunt Elizabeth at once. How are you, Aunt Priscilla? This is our little French-English girl, but I hope she will turn into a stanch Boston girl. Now, mother, let's have a good supper. I'm hungry as a wolf."

Doris caught Betty's hand again and pressed it to her cheek. The smiling face won her at once.

"Did you have a pleasant voyage?" asked Mrs. Leverett, as she was piling up the cups and saucers, and paused to smile at the little stranger.

"There were some storms, and I was afraid then. It made me think of papa. But there was a good deal of sunshine. And I was quite ill

at first, but the captain was very nice, and Mrs. Jewett had two little girls, so after a while we played together. And then I think we forgot all about being at sea—it was so like a house, except there were no gardens or fields and trees."

Mrs. Leverett went out to the kitchen, and soon there was the savory smell of frying sausage. Betty placed Doris in a chair by the chimney corner and began to rearrange the table. Warren went out to the kitchen and, as by the farthest window there was a sort of high bench with a tin basin, a pail of water, and a long roller towel, he began to wash his face and hands, telling his mother meanwhile the occurrences of the last two or three hours.

Aunt Priscilla drew up her chair and surveyed the little traveler with some curiosity. She was rather shocked that the child was not dressed in mourning, and now she discovered, that her little gown was of brocaded silk and much furbelowed, at which she frowned severely.

True, her father had been dead more than a year; but her being an orphan made it seem as if she should still be in the depths of woe. And she had earrings and a brooch in the lace tucker. She gave her sniff—it was very wintry and contemptuous.

"I suppose that's the latest French fashion," she said sharply. "If I lived in England I should just despise French clothes."

"Oh," said Doris, "do you mean my gown? Miss Arabella made it for me. When she was a young lady she went up to London to see the king crowned, and they had a grand ball, and this was one of the gowns she had—not the ball dress, for that was white satin with roses sprinkled over it. She's very old now, and she gave that to her cousin for a wedding dress. And she made this over for me. I got some tar on my blue stuff gown yesterday, and the others were so thin Mrs. Jewett thought I had better put on this, but it is my very best gown."

The artless sincerity and the soft sweet voice quite nonplused Aunt Priscilla. Then Warren returned and dropped on a three-cornered stool standing there, and almost tilted over.

"Now, if I had gone into the fire, like any other green log, how I should have sizzled!" he said laughingly.

"Oh, I am so glad you didn't!" exclaimed Doris in affright. Then she smiled softly.

"Does it seem queer to be on land again?"

"Yes. I want to rock to and fro." She made a pretty movement with her slender body, and nodded her head.

"Are you very tired?"

"Oh, no."

"You were out five weeks."

"Is that a long while? I was homesick at first. I wanted to see Miss Arabella and Barby. Miss Henrietta is—is—not right in her mind, if you can understand. And she is very old. She just sits in her chair all day and mumbles. She was named for a queen—Henrietta Maria."

Aunt Priscilla gave a disapproving sniff.

"Supper's ready," said Mr. Leverett. "Come."

Warren took the small stranger by the hand, and she made a little courtesy, quite as if she were a grown lady.

"What an airy little piece of vanity!" thought Aunt Priscilla. "And whatever will Winthrop Adams do with her, and no woman about the house to train her!"

Betty came and poured tea for her father and Warren. Mr. Leverett piled up her plate, but, although the viands had an appetizing fragrance, Doris was not hungry. Everything was so new and strange, and she could not get the motion of the ship out of her head. But the pumpkin pie was delicious. She had never tasted anything like it.

"You'll soon be a genuine Yankee girl," declared Warren. "Pumpkin pie is the test."

Mr. Leverett and his son did full justice to the supper. Then he had to go out to a meeting. There were some clouds drifting over the skies of the new country, and many discussions as to future policy.

"So, Aunt Priscilla, I'll bea you home," said he; "unless you have a mind to stay all night, or want a young fellow like Warren."

"You're plenty old enough to be sensible, Foster Leverett," she returned sharply. She would have enjoyed a longer stay and was curious about the newcomer, but when Betty brought her hat and shawl she said a stiff good-night to everybody and went out with her escort.

Betty cleared away the tea things, wiped the dishes for her mother and then took a place beside Warren, who was very much interested in hearing the little girl talk. There was a good deal of going back and forth to England although the journey seemed so long, but it was startling to have a child sitting by the fireside, here in his father's house, who had lived in both France and England. She had an odd little accent, too, but it gave her an added daintiness. She remembered her convent life very well, and her stay in Paris with her father. It seemed strange to him that she could talk so tranquilly about her parents, but there had been so many changes in her short life, and her father had been away from her so much!

"It always seemed to me as if he must come back again," she said with a serious little sigh, "as if he was over in France or down in London. It is so strange to have anyone go away forever that I think you can't take it in somehow. And Miss Arabella was always so good. She said if she had been younger she should never have agreed to my coming. And all papa's relatives were here, and someone who wrote to her and settled about the journey."

She glanced up inquiringly.

"Yes. That's Uncle Winthrop Adams. He isn't an own uncle, but it seems somehow more respectful to call him uncle. Mr. Adams would sound queer. And he will be your guardian."

"A—guardian?"

"Well, he has the care of the property left to your father. There is a house that is rented, and a great plot of ground. Cousin Charles owned so much land, and he never was married, so it had to go round to the cousins. He was very fond of your father as a little boy. And Uncle Winthrop seems the proper person to take charge of you."

Doris sighed. She seemed always being handed from one to another.

She was sitting on the stool now, and when Betty slipped into the vacant chair she put her arm over the child's shoulder in a caressing manner.

"Do you mean—that I would have to go and live with him?" she asked slowly.

Warren laughed. "I declare I don't know what Uncle Win would do with a little girl! Miss Recompense Gardiner keeps the house, and she's as prim as the crimped edge of an apple pie. And there is only Cary."

"Cary is at Harvard—at college," explained Betty. "And, then, he is going to Europe for a tour. Uncle Win teaches some classes, and is a great Greek and Latin scholar, and translates from the poets, and reads and studies—is a regular bookworm. His wife has been dead ever since Cary was a baby."

"I wish I could stay here," said Doris, and, reaching up, she clasped her arms around Betty's neck. "I like your father, and your mother has such a sweet voice, and you—and him," nodding her head over to Warren. "And since that—the other lady—doesn't live here—"

"Aunt Priscilla," laughed Betty. "I think she improves on acquaintance. Her bark is worse than her bite. When I was a little girl I thought her just awful, and never wanted to go there. Now I quite like it. I spend whole days with her. But I shouldn't spend a night in praying that Providence would send her to live with us. I'd fifty times rather have you, you dear little midget. And, when everything is settled, I am of the opinion you will live with us, for a while at least."

"I shall be so glad," in a joyous, relieved tone.

"Then if Uncle Win should ask you, don't be afraid of anybody, but just say you want to stay here. That will settle it unless he thinks you ought to go to school. But there are nice enough schools in Boston. And I am glad you want to stay. I've wished a great many times that I had a little sister. I have two, married. One lives over at Salem and one ever so far away at Hartford. And I am Aunt Betty. I have five nephews and four nieces. And you never can have any, you solitary little girl!"