

Meeting Manon *by Claudia Winter*



I was four years old when my family moved to the little, bilingual town of Aylmer, Quebec—the whole family, dad, mom, Grammy, seven children and our big red Irish setter, Michael. I have a vivid memory of us arriving in two taxis. My father never owned a family car. Our two-story, white wooden house had dark green trim and looked big to me.

It was in this town I met my best friend, Manon—a French girl who lived across the street, also in a big, white wooden house. Manon's house had a large backyard where there was a hand-built, white wooden play house complete with a peaked roof, long front verandah, and glass windows. Inside, there was wooden furniture—tables, chairs and doll cribs we could arrange and rearrange. There was also enough room for us to bring our doll buggies inside.

We had many a tea party and picnic in Manon's backyard. In fact, we spent almost every day of our younger years there together. If it wasn't Manon calling on me to go play in the play house, it was me over knocking on her door. I can say that I am happy my family moved to the unique town of Aylmer.

Who could have guessed that 35 years later, when I was living far from Quebec in a small rural area on Vancouver Island called Maple Bay, that I'd receive a letter from my long ago childhood friend. Manon had got my address by contacting my brother in Ontario. In addition to the surprise of our reconnecting, Manon wrote that she suspected her sister-in-law was my mail lady. It turns out that Manon's husband had grown up in Maple Bay and sure enough his sister, Manon's sister-in-law, was my mail lady.

Since our reconnection, Manon and her husband have moved to Vancouver Island. With me living just across the way in Powell River we get to visit a few times a year.

It really is a small world after all.