



B1-B2

MODERNE LEKTÜRE + WORTERKLÄRUNGEN

easyOriginal

# THE PEONY CHRONICLES

002 REFLECTIONS EVERYDAY SHORT STORIES



ENGLISH

Mabel Kemp

# The Peony Chronicles

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*to be continued*

# The Peony Chronicles



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# Chapter 1

## The Bookshop Bouquet

Rain tapped<sup>1</sup> against the windows of Bookmark as I arranged<sup>2</sup> the new fiction display<sup>3</sup>. April showers had been constant this week, keeping the village indoors and my shop quieter than usual. The brass<sup>4</sup> bell<sup>5</sup> above the door jingled<sup>6</sup>, bringing in a gust<sup>7</sup> of damp<sup>8</sup> air and Emma Lancaster, arms full of flowers.

"Morning, Alice!" she called, dripping<sup>9</sup> onto the welcome mat<sup>10</sup>. "Special delivery. First peonies of the season, and I thought of you immediately<sup>11</sup>."

- 
- |    |                        |
|----|------------------------|
| 1  | to tap - klopfen       |
| 2  | to arrange - anordnen  |
| 3  | display - Ausstellung  |
| 4  | brass - Messing        |
| 5  | bell - Glocke          |
| 6  | to jingle - klingeln   |
| 7  | gust - Windstoß        |
| 8  | damp - feucht          |
| 9  | to drip - tropfen      |
| 10 | welcome mat - Fußmatte |
| 11 | immediately - sofort   |

My heart lifted<sup>12</sup> at the sight of the plump<sup>13</sup> pink blooms<sup>14</sup> nestled<sup>15</sup> among ferns<sup>16</sup> and white sprigs<sup>17</sup> of breath. "Emma, they're beautiful! How much do I owe<sup>18</sup> you?"

She waved away<sup>19</sup> my question. "Consider<sup>20</sup> it a gift to brighten<sup>21</sup> this dreary<sup>22</sup> day. Besides, they opened a bit early and won't last<sup>23</sup> for selling."

I found my grandmother's old blue vase in the back room and filled it with water. As I unwrapped<sup>24</sup> the bouquet, the sweet, subtle fragrance<sup>25</sup> transported me instantly<sup>26</sup> to my childhood<sup>27</sup>—to Grandma's garden where peonies lined<sup>28</sup> the brick<sup>29</sup> pathway<sup>30</sup>,

- 
- |    |                            |
|----|----------------------------|
| 12 | to lift - heben            |
| 13 | plump - prall              |
| 14 | bloom - Blüte              |
| 15 | to nestle - sich schmiegen |
| 16 | fern - Farn                |
| 17 | sprig - Zweig              |
| 18 | to owe - schulden          |
| 19 | to wave away - abwinken    |
| 20 | to consider - betrachten   |
| 21 | to brighten - aufhellen    |
| 22 | dreary - trist             |
| 23 | to last - dauern           |
| 24 | to unwrap - auspacken      |
| 25 | fragrance - Duft           |
| 26 | instantly - augenblicklich |
| 27 | childhood - Kindheit       |
| 28 | to line - säumen           |
| 29 | brick - Ziegel             |
| 30 | pathway - Pfad             |

their heavy heads nodding<sup>31</sup> in June breezes.

"Perfect spot<sup>32</sup>," Emma approved<sup>33</sup> as I placed them on the counter near the register<sup>34</sup>. "They need to be seen."

Throughout<sup>35</sup> the morning, the peonies worked a kind of magic on my customers<sup>36</sup>. Mrs. Wilson, who normally<sup>37</sup> hurried<sup>38</sup> through her mystery novel selections<sup>39</sup> with barely<sup>40</sup> a word, paused<sup>41</sup> to admire<sup>42</sup> them.

"My mother grew these," she said softly, touching<sup>43</sup> a petal<sup>44</sup> with careful<sup>45</sup> fingers. "The same shade of pink." For a moment, her eyes glistened<sup>46</sup> with unexpected<sup>47</sup> tears before she collected<sup>48</sup>

- 
- |    |                          |
|----|--------------------------|
| 31 | to nod - nicken          |
| 32 | spot - Stelle            |
| 33 | to approve - zustimmen   |
| 34 | register - Kasse         |
| 35 | throughout - während     |
| 36 | customer - Kunde         |
| 37 | normally - normalerweise |
| 38 | to hurry - eilen         |
| 39 | selection - Auswahl      |
| 40 | barely - kaum            |
| 41 | to pause - innehalten    |
| 42 | to admire - bewundern    |
| 43 | to touch - berühren      |
| 44 | petal - Blütenblatt      |
| 45 | careful - vorsichtig     |
| 46 | to glisten - glänzen     |
| 47 | unexpected - unerwartet  |
| 48 | to collect - sammeln     |

herself and continued her shopping.

Later, ten-year-old Sophie from the village school came in with her mother. While her mother browsed<sup>49</sup> the cookbooks, Sophie stood transfixed<sup>50</sup> before the flowers.

"They look like ballet dancers," she whispered<sup>51</sup>, then asked if she could draw them. She sat cross-legged<sup>52</sup> on the floor with paper and colored pencils, her face serious with concentration.

By afternoon, a young couple<sup>53</sup> I hadn't seen before wandered<sup>54</sup> in, shaking off<sup>55</sup> umbrellas.

"Peonies!" the woman exclaimed<sup>56</sup>. "Mark, look — just like the ones at that garden where you proposed<sup>57</sup>." They shared a private smile, fingers intertwining<sup>58</sup> as they told me they were visiting Ferndale for their anniversary<sup>59</sup>.

As closing time<sup>60</sup> approached<sup>61</sup>, the rain finally stopped.

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49 to browse - stöbern

50 transfixed - gebannt

51 to whisper - flüstern

52 cross-legged - im Schneidersitz

53 couple - Paar

54 to wander - schlendern

55 to shake off - abschütteln

56 to exclaim - ausrufen

57 to propose - einen Antrag machen

58 to intertwine - verschränken

59 anniversary - Jahrestag

60 closing time - Ladenschluss

61 to approach - sich nähern

Sunshine<sup>62</sup> broke through<sup>63</sup>, sending golden light across<sup>64</sup> the wooden floorboards<sup>65</sup>. Some of the peony petals had begun to fall, creating a soft pink carpet on the counter. I was gathering<sup>66</sup> them when the bell rang<sup>67</sup> once more.

James Mitchell, the village veterinarian, stepped<sup>68</sup> inside. His dark hair was slightly<sup>69</sup> damp, and he carried<sup>70</sup> a folder<sup>71</sup> under one arm.

"Just made it," he said with a smile. "Has my book arrived?"

"It has." I reached<sup>72</sup> beneath<sup>73</sup> the counter for the bird identification guide he'd ordered<sup>74</sup>. "Came yesterday."

James noticed<sup>75</sup> the flowers and his expression<sup>76</sup> softened<sup>77</sup>. "Peonies already? That's early this year."

- 
- |    |                                 |
|----|---------------------------------|
| 62 | sunshine - Sonnenschein         |
| 63 | to break through - durchbrechen |
| 64 | across - über                   |
| 65 | floorboard - Dielenbrett        |
| 66 | to gather - sammeln             |
| 67 | to ring - klingeln              |
| 68 | to step - treten                |
| 69 | slightly - leicht               |
| 70 | to carry - tragen               |
| 71 | folder - Mappe                  |
| 72 | to reach - greifen              |
| 73 | beneath - unter                 |
| 74 | to order - bestellen            |
| 75 | to notice - bemerken            |
| 76 | expression - Gesichtsausdruck   |
| 77 | to soften - erweichen           |

"Emma brought them this morning. They've been quite the conversation piece."

He approached the counter, touching one of the fallen petals. "My mother grew these in our garden in Devon. Not many flowers have such presence, do they?"

"They've been reminding<sup>78</sup> everyone of someone today," I said. "They seem to carry memories."

Together we gathered the scattered<sup>79</sup> petals. Our fingers brushed<sup>80</sup> once, twice, and I felt a surprising<sup>81</sup> flutter<sup>82</sup> in my chest<sup>83</sup>. James collected<sup>84</sup> a small handful<sup>85</sup> and looked at them thoughtfully<sup>86</sup>.

"Too beautiful to throw away<sup>87</sup>," he said.

I found a small paper envelope<sup>88</sup> and held it open. "Take them home if you like."

He tipped<sup>89</sup> the petals inside, his eyes meeting mine with

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78 to remind - erinnern

79 scattered - verstreut

80 to brush - streifen

81 surprising - überraschend

82 flutter - Flattern

83 chest - Brust

84 to collect - sammeln

85 handful - Handvoll

86 thoughtfully - nachdenklich

87 to throw away - wegwerfen

88 envelope - Umschlag

89 to tip - kippen

unexpected warmth<sup>90</sup>. "Thank you. I think I'll press them in a book."

"A man after my own heart," I said, then felt my cheeks warm slightly. "My grandmother taught me to press flowers between heavy books. I still do it sometimes."

James paid for his guide, tucking<sup>91</sup> the envelope of petals inside. "Perhaps you could show me your technique sometime? I'd like to preserve<sup>92</sup> these properly<sup>93</sup>."

"I'd be happy to," I replied, surprised by how much I meant it.

After he left, I selected one perfect petal from those remaining and placed it inside my current novel as a bookmark<sup>94</sup>. The rain had started again, a soft patter against the windows, but the shop felt warmer somehow.

That single bouquet had created a day of stories and connections I hadn't expected when Emma first arrived. I locked<sup>95</sup> the shop door and turned<sup>96</sup> the sign to 'Closed,' wondering<sup>97</sup> what memories the peonies had stirred<sup>98</sup> for James, and why the thought made me smile all the way home through the rain.

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90    warmth - Wärme

91    to tuck - stecken

92    to preserve - konservieren

93    properly - ordnungsgemäß

94    bookmark - Lesezeichen

95    to lock - abschließen

96    to turn - drehen

97    to wonder - sich fragen

98    to stir - rühren

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