

T *Chapter 1.* Behind the house the hills rose in a great sweep of melancholy grandeur. Before it lay the wide restless ocean. Juliet dreamed. She stood at the foot of a great bush-covered hill. It towered above her, and she had a curious sensation that it was alive and filled with antagonism towards her. On the very crown of the hill the sunlight lay, sheer golden. Juliet began to slowly climb. At first she followed a narrow sheep track for a short time, then lost sight of it and clung to brambles and trees, sometimes finding a firm foothold, sometimes stumbling or sinking ankle deep into a mass of rotting leaves. 'This will take me a terribly long time' she thought. Then a hand grasped hers and someone pulled her swiftly and carefully over the fallen tree trunks, across the narrow streams. She was out of the bush now. A long stretch of short grass was before her. The unseen guide disappeared. Juliet resolutely walked on. The hill seemed to increase to an enormous size and the patch of sunlight at the top grew more intense. The air became full of sound. She was conscious of many people near her, of voices raised in anger or alarm. 'I must try and not look to the right or to the left' she thought, 'but only at the sunlight.' Then she entered the bush again. The trees crowded round her, menacing, terrible. The fern trees waved their long green branches. 'They are like arms' thought Juliet. She walked faster, then began running, and suddenly tripped over a long thick supplejack and fell.

For some inexplicable reason she began to cry loudly, like a little child, and made no attempt to get up. Then someone caught her by the shoulders and put her on her feet again and brushed the earth and twigs from her dress. She walked on, sobbing a little, and full of despair. On and on, until a river rushed across her path. 'Now it is all over' she thought. 'I shall have to stay on this side.' She sat down on a flat rock and began throwing little pebbles into the water, and each pebble as it fell floated on the top of the water until there was a great bridge of the pebbles, and she walked across to the other side quite safely. Now she found a road, a dusty much-used road, and suddenly a great fog swept over all the land. Again she heard the sound of many voices, and suddenly in the darkness someone struck her in the face. A feeling of intolerable shame seized her – she ran faster and faster, and when the fog drew away it reminded her of the man at the circus. When he lifted the handkerchief off the flower-pot something beautiful was there. She was very near the end of the journey. Just a few more steps. But how heavy she had become! She could hardly walk. She was too tired to look for the sunlight, she only saw the dust on the road. So few more steps and then she could rest and feel that all the trouble was behind her. Her steps grew slower and slower. She seemed hardly to be moving. Suddenly a gust of cold air blew on to her face. She looked up. She stood on the summit of the mountain. There was no sunlight, no