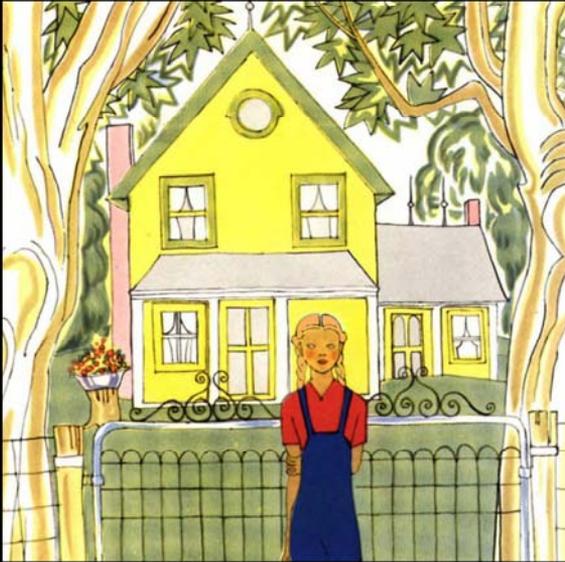


Anne of Green Gables



Adapted from the novel by L.M. Montgomery

Tracy Wells

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Anne of Green Gables

3

*For Connor,
May your inquisitive mind
and extraordinary imagination
always be as bright
as the beloved heroine of this story.*

Anne of Green Gables

CLASSIC. Adapted from the novel by L.M. Montgomery. Matthew Cuthbert and his sister, Marilla, are getting older and decide to adopt a boy from an orphanage to help out on their farm, Green Gables. But when Matthew arrives at the train station, he is disappointed when he discovers that the orphanage mistakenly sent a girl instead of a boy. However, Anne Shirley, a cheerful young orphan with freckles and red hair, instantly charms Matthew, and he convinces his sister to keep Anne instead of returning her to the orphanage. The precocious, imaginative Anne happily settles into her new life at Green Gables but manages to get into a few misadventures along the way. She dyes her hair green, jumps off the roof in a dare, and mistakenly bakes a cake with liniment instead of vanilla. Anne proves to be one of the smartest pupils at her school and earns a prestigious scholarship to attend college. But when Matthew unexpectedly dies, Anne shows her devotion to Green Gables by giving up her scholarship and staying at home to help Marilla on the farm. Audiences will love this charming, heartfelt classic.

Performance Time: Approximately 120 minutes.



Lucy Maud Montgomery, Green Gables farmhouse on Prince Edward Island.

About the Story

Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery was born on Prince Edward Island, Canada. Montgomery's mother died when she was 21 months old, so her father sent her to live with her strict maternal grandparents in Cavendish, Prince Edward Island. As a child, Montgomery loved to read and enjoyed nature and the outdoors. She attended Prince of Wales College, obtained her teaching certificate, and worked as a teacher at various schools. Montgomery's first book, *Anne of Green Gables*, was published in 1908 and was an immediate success. Montgomery drew on her childhood experiences for the novel and many of the places in the fictional town of Avonlea are based on places in Cavendish, including the Green Gables farmhouse, which has become a popular tourist attraction on the island. In 1911, Montgomery married Ewan MacDonald, a Presbyterian minister, and the couple had two sons. Montgomery went on to write seven more novels featuring her popular character, Anne. Before her death in 1942, Montgomery published 20 novels and hundreds of short stories and poems. Today, *Anne of Green Gables* remains a popular children's classic.

Characters

(9 M, 14 F, opt. extras)
(With doubling: 5 M, 9 F)

ANNE SHIRLEY: Talkative, precocious, imaginative orphan from an orphanage in Nova Scotia who is adopted by the Cuthberts and grows up on their Prince Edward Island farm, Green Gables; has red hair and freckles and wears plain dresses and a hat.

MARILLA CUTHBERT: Unmarried, aging matron of Green Gables who is stern but kind to Anne and has a wry sense of humor; wears neat, plain dresses; female.

MATTHEW CUTHBERT: Marilla's kind, aging bachelor brother who is painfully shy but instantly takes a liking to Anne; wears farm clothes.

DIANA BARRY: Anne's best friend who lives nearby; wears her hair in pigtails.

MRS. BARRY: Diana's strict, no-nonsense mother.

MINNIE MAY BARRY: Diana's younger sister.

GILBERT BLYTHE: Handsome, intelligent student who becomes Anne's rival at school after he teases her about her red hair.

JOHN BLYTHE: Gilbert's father who courted Marilla Cuthbert when they were young.

RACHEL LYNDE: Town busybody and gossip who lives next door to the Cuthberts; female.

MR. PHILLIPS: Ineffectual Avonlea schoolteacher who is unpopular with students.

MISS MURIEL STACY: Imaginative, creative schoolteacher who replaces Mr. Phillips and is popular with her students, particularly Anne who views her as a kindred spirit and mentor.

JOSIE PYE: Anne's mean-spirited classmate who is disliked by the other students; female.

RUBY GILLIS: Anne's friend who loves to talk about boys; female.

JANE ANDREWS: Ruby's friend who is plain and sensible; female.

CHARLIE SPOANE: Student who has a crush on Anne; male.

MOODY SPURGEON MACPHERSON: Class clown at Avonlea school; male.

PRISSY ANDREWS: Pretty, older student at school; female.

MRS. BLEWETT: Harsh, cruel resident of Avonlea who offers to take Anne as a babysitter.

MR. ALLAN: New Avonlea pastor who is well-liked by the Avonlea townspeople.

MRS. ALLAN: Pastor's kind wife who Anne adores.

MRS. SPENCER: Woman from the orphanage who brings Anne to Avonlea.

STATION MASTER: Avonlea train station master; wears a uniform and watch; male.

DOCTOR: Avonlea town doctor; male.

EXTRAS (opt.): As Townspeople and Students.

Options for Doubling

STATION MASTER/DOCTOR (male role)

MR. PHILLIPS/JOHN BLYTHE (male role)

MINNIE MAY/JANE (female role)

MISS STACY/MRS. SPENCER (female role)

RACHEL LYNDE/MRS. ALLAN (female role)

MRS. BARRY/MRS. BLEWITT/PRISSY (2 female roles)

Setting

1878, town of Avonlea, Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Set

The sets may be as simple or as elaborate as your budget allows.

Avonlea train station. On one side there is a sign indicating a train station's departures and arrivals. There are one or two benches onstage. An optional backdrop representing shop fronts, businesses, and institutions may be used as well as trees and plants to set the scene.

Green Gables kitchen. There is a table with three chairs. A window frame is present. Optional items such as a sink, kitchen counter, or stove may be added.

Schoolhouse. There is a teacher's chalkboard CS, a teacher's desk, and nine student desks or tables with benches. The student desks have books, slates, and chalk on them.

Costumes

Costumes should represent the late 1800s. As characters age, minor changes should be made to the costumes to represent this. Girls should wear longer skirts with more adult hairstyles instead of braids or pigtails. Boys should wear longer pants and age-appropriate hats.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Avonlea train station.

Scene 2: Kitchen at Green Gables.

Scene 3: Kitchen at Green Gables.

Scene 4: Schoolhouse.

Scene 5: Green Gables.

Scene 6: Green Gables.

Scene 7: Green Gables.

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: Schoolhouse.

Scene 2: Schoolhouse.

Scene 3: Avonlea exterior. There is a space in front for a "stream." A tree stump is on one side.

Scene 4: Schoolhouse.

Scene 5: Avonlea train station, a year later.

Scene 6: Green Gables.

Props

Shopping bag	Blanket
Assorted luggage	Bottle
Paper	Spoon
Bolt of fabric	Cloth
Vase of flowers	Bowl
Needlepoint	Stethoscope
Teapot	Plate of cookies
2 Teacups with saucers	Coat and hat, for Marilla
Women's handkerchief	Coat and hat, for Matthew
Large pincushion	Purse or bag, for Marilla
Church clothes and a hat, for Marilla	Wad of paper
Church clothes and a hat, for Matthew	Christmas décor
Amethyst brooch	Banana peel
Shawl	3 Hats
Wildflowers	3 Fake mustaches
9 Slates and chalk	Cane
9 Books	Dress with puffed sleeves and a large hat, for Anne
Tea set	Green wig (opt.), for Anne
Tray/serving dish of cookies and cake	Tree stump
Silver candlestick	Flower
Men's handkerchief	Yellow scarf
Plum	Black shawl
Apple	Book
Vanilla bottle	Wooden raft with wheels and a fishing line attached
Bottle of red liquid	Gold medal
Bowl of jam with spoon	Scroll tied with a ribbon
Long wooden board	Newspaper
Pillow	

Special Effects

Train whistle
Crash

*“...I’ll always be
Anne of Green Gables.
And that’s Anne
with an ‘e’.*

—Anne

ACT I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Late 1800s, Town of Avonlea, Prince Edward Island, Canada. Summer. Station Master is standing near the train station sign and checks his watch. Mrs. Blewett is seated on a park bench looking through a shopping bag. Rachel Lynde enters, looks around, and rushes to Mrs. Blewett.)

RACHEL: Oh, Mrs. Blewett! How fortunate that I should run into you.

MRS. BLEWETT: (*Snidely.*) Is that so, Mrs. Lynde? I suppose you have a bit of gossip you're dying to share with someone.

RACHEL: (*Hurt.*) Why would you say such a thing? I am hardly a gossip.

MRS. BLEWETT: Oh, please! Everyone knows you're the biggest gossip in Avonlea.

RACHEL: All right, you've got me there. I do have some fascinating news from over at Green Gables...

MRS. BLEWETT: Fascinating news from Green Gables? Why, that's not something you hear everyday. Old Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert lead a quiet life up on that hill.

RACHEL: Well, you know Lynde's Hollow is located in a place where I can see most of the activity in Avonlea. In fact, my property borders Green Gables on one side. I can see all the comings and goings at Green Gables from my front porch.

MRS. BLEWETT: And I bet you spend most of your time on that front porch just so you can keep tabs on the rest of us. Isn't that so, Mrs. Lynde?

RACHEL: I can't help it if I'm curious. (*Moves in closer.*) As I was saying, just this morning, I saw Matthew and Marilla readying their horse and cart.

MRS. BLEWETT: What's so interesting about that? They most likely had errands to run.

RACHEL: But they were wearing their Sunday best!

MRS. BLEWETT: Their Sunday best, huh? That is surprising. What do you think that means?

RACHEL: Well, I certainly wasn't going to wonder about it all day. I went right over to Green Gables and asked Marilla myself.

MRS. BLEWETT: What did she say?

RACHEL: It turns out that Matthew and Marilla asked old Mrs. Spencer from the orphanage to bring them a boy. It seems they need someone to help Matthew around the farm.

MRS. BLEWETT: Well, if I had known Mrs. Spencer was coming, I would've had her bring me a young girl to mind my children. Those kids of mine are all a bunch of little brats.

RACHEL: Naturally, when I found out, I had to race down here to see the little boy for myself. It wouldn't be right for Matthew and Marilla to adopt a boy without hearing my opinion of him first.

(Ruby Gillis enters SR in a hurry.)

RUBY: Mrs. Lynde! Mrs. Lynde!

RACHEL: Calm down this instant, Ruby Gillis. Whatever is the matter?

RUBY: My mother is making a chocolate cake for the church social, and it just won't rise. She sent me to find you. She said, "Rachel Lynde will know what to do."

RACHEL: I don't know what the people of Avonlea would do without me. You must excuse me, Mrs. Blewett.

MRS. BLEWETT: It's all right, Mrs. Lynde. I must go to the market before the train arrives. When Mrs. Spencer gets here, I want to speak with her about getting a young girl to help me around the house.

RACHEL: Good day, Mrs. Blewett. Come now, Ruby, let's see about that chocolate cake.

(Ruby and Rachel exit. Mrs. Blewett exits opposite them. Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert enter. They are both dressed plainly but neatly.)

MARILLA: Come along now, Matthew. The train will be here any minute.

MATTHEW: You know I don't like coming into town, Marilla.

MARILLA: Dear brother, you are the shyest man I have ever met. It's no wonder you never married.

MATTHEW: Females make me nervous. And the younger they are, the more they frighten me. I suppose that's why I never courted

anyone. You never married, darling sister, and you're not afraid of anybody.

MARILLA: (*Scoffs.*) I never had the time to worry about such nonsense. I had enough work around the farm without worrying about boys.

MATTHEW: (*Smiles.*) What about John Blythe?

MARILLA: (*Agitated.*) What about him? (*Turns away.*) This is a silly conversation, and I will have no more of it. I am going to buy some fabric to make our new boy some overalls. I'll be back shortly. (*Exits in a huff.*)

MATTHEW: (*To himself, chuckles.*) I may be going on [70 years old], but I still know how to ruffle my sister's feathers. (*Train whistle is heard. Some Townspeople enter and stand about, waiting.*) That'll be the train now. [*Or insert another age.*]

STATION MASTER: (*Announces.*) Now arriving, the 5:30 train from Hopetown, Nova Scotia.

(*Carrying luggage, Arriving Townspeople enter near the sign. A few, including Mrs. Spencer, cross to Waiting Townspeople, embrace, and exit. Carrying a bag, Anne Shirley enters, wearing worn clothes and a hat. She and Matthew look around. Anne sits on a bench near the Station Master. Pause. Matthew crosses to Station Master.*)

MATTHEW: Excuse me, sir, but I am expecting a passenger...a young boy from the orphanage at Hopetown.

STATION MASTER: I'm afraid everyone has exited the train, sir.

MATTHEW: But I didn't see any young boys arrive. Could you please check again? I'm expecting a boy of about ten or 11 years of age.

(*Station Master pulls out a paper and inspects it.*)

STATION MASTER: This, here, is a list of everyone traveling on the 5:30 train. I'm sorry, sir, but the only child of ten or 11 years old is sitting right over there. (*Points to Anne.*) But as you can see, she isn't a boy.

MATTHEW: No, she sure isn't.

STATION MASTER: Guess there's been some mistake. Maybe the orphanage was out of boys of the type you wanted. You'd better question the girl. I daresay she'll be able to explain. (*Exits.*)

MATTHEW: *(To himself.)* Do I have to talk to the girl? *(Anxious, looks around and wrings his hands.)* Oh, where's Marilla when you need her? *(Anne, who has been watching the exchange, stands and crosses to Matthew. She taps him on the shoulder as he looks the opposite way. Startled, he jumps and turns to Anne.)* Yowza! Who goes there?

ANNE: I suppose you are Mr. Matthew Cuthbert of Green Gables? *(Matthew just stares at Anne with a frightened look.)* I'm very glad to see you. I was beginning to fear you weren't coming for me, and Mrs. Spencer said I was to meet you right here. I had made up my mind that if you didn't come for me tonight, I'd go down the track to that big wild cherry tree at the bend, climb up it, and stay all night. It would be lovely to sleep in a wild cherry tree, don't you think? And I was quite sure you'd come for me in the morning, if you didn't tonight.

MATTHEW: But...but...you're a—

ANNE: *(Heavy sigh.)* A redhead. I know it. I don't mind my freckles or my green eyes or my skinniness so much. I can imagine them away. I can imagine I have a beautiful rosy complexion and lovely violet eyes. But I cannot imagine that red hair away. *(Matthew smiles.)* I do my best, that's for sure. I think to myself, "Now my hair is a glorious black." But all the time I know it is just plain red, and it breaks my heart. It will be my lifelong sorrow. I do wish I were divinely beautiful. Have you ever imagined what it must be like to be divinely beautiful?

MATTHEW: Well, now, no, I...I haven't.

ANNE: I have, often. Which would you be if you had the choice: divinely beautiful, or dazzlingly clever, or angelically good?

MATTHEW: Well, now, I...I don't know, exactly.

ANNE: Neither do I. I can never decide. But it doesn't make much real difference, for it isn't likely I'll ever be any of those things. It's certain I'll never be angelically good. *(Looks around.)* Should we be going home now? Will we be walking or do you have a horse and cart?

MATTHEW: We'll be taking a horse and cart. *(Realizes he doesn't know what to do with Anne.)* I mean, if we go home.

ANNE: Do you mean we might be able to spend a little time looking about town? Oh, I can't wait to see all the wonders Avonlea has to offer. It is to be my home now, after all. But I must say, I am anxious to see Green Gables. Mrs. Spencer says it is lovely.

MATTHEW: *(Pleased.)* Did she, now?

ANNE: Oh, yes. And she said such lovely things about you and your sister. It seems so wonderful that I'm going to live with you and belong to you. I've never belonged to anyone...not really.

MATTHEW: Well, now...let's not get too caught up just yet.

ANNE: The mistress at the orphanage used to tell me that all the time: "Anne, don't get too caught up in your daydreams. You've got work to do." The orphanage was the worst. I've only been in it for four months, but that was enough. They keep us older ones busy most of the day with chores and minding the little children. It doesn't leave a lot of time in the day to imagine things. *(Turns suddenly to Matthew.)* But am I talking too much? People are always telling me I do. Would you rather I didn't talk? If you say so, I'll stop. I can stop when I make up my mind to it, although it's difficult.

MATTHEW: Oh, you can talk as much as you like. I don't mind.

ANNE: I'm so glad. I know you and I are going to get along. *(Throws her arms around Matthew and looks up at him.)* You and I are kindred spirits, you know.

(Marilla enters carrying a bolt of fabric and sees Anne hugging Matthew.)

MARILLA: Matthew Cuthbert, who's that? Where is the boy?

(Matthew breaks away from Anne.)

MATTHEW: There wasn't any boy. There was only her.

MARILLA: No boy?! But there must have been a boy. We sent word with Mrs. Spencer to bring a boy.

MATTHEW: Well, she didn't. *(Indicating Anne.)* She brought her.

(Agitated, Marilla turns away from them and crosses her arms.)

MARILLA: Well, this is a pretty piece of business!

ANNE: You don't want me! You don't want me because I'm not a boy. I might have expected it. Nobody ever did want me. Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?

(Anne falls to the ground and begins to sob. Marilla and Matthew stare at Anne and then at each other.)

MARILLA: Well, well, there's no need to cry about it.

ANNE: Yes, there is need! You would cry, too, if you were an orphan and had come to a place you thought was going to be home and found that they didn't want you because you weren't a boy. Oh, this is the most tragic thing that has ever happened to me!
(*Bursts into tears again.*)

MARILLA: Well, don't cry anymore. We'll straighten this whole matter out. Matthew, go fetch Mrs. Spencer right away. Let her know that— (*Gesturing to Anne and realizing she doesn't know her name.*) I'm sorry, dear, what did you say your name was?

ANNE: (*Looks up.*) Will you please call me Cordelia?

MARILLA: Call you Cordelia? Is that your name?

(*Anne stands.*)

ANNE: (*Sheepishly.*) No, it's not exactly my name, but I would love to be called Cordelia. It's such an elegant name.

MARILLA: I don't know what on earth you mean. If Cordelia isn't your name, what is?

ANNE: Anne Shirley. But please call me Cordelia. Anne is such an unromantic name.

MARILLA: Unromantic!? Fiddlesticks! Anne is a good, plain, sensible name.

ANNE: All right, but if you call me Anne, please call me Anne spelled with an "e."

MARILLA: What difference does it make how it's spelled?

ANNE: Oh, it makes such a difference. (*Spells.*) A-N-N looks dreadful, but... (*Spells.*) ...A-N-N-E looks so distinguished. If you'll only call me Anne—spelled with an "e"—I shall reconcile myself to not being called Cordelia.

MARILLA: Very well. Matthew, can you please fetch Mrs. Spencer and let her know that Anne, spelled with an "e," is waiting, and we must figure out how this mistake was made?

MATTHEW: Right away, Marilla. (*Exits.*)

MARILLA: Anne, can you tell me how this happened? Were there no boys at the orphanage?

ANNE: There was an abundance of them, but Mrs. Spencer distinctly said you wanted a girl. (*Takes Marilla's arm. Suddenly.*) Is it because of my red hair? If I had brown hair, would you keep me?

MARILLA: Don't be silly. We want a boy to help Matthew on the farm. A girl would be of no use to us.

ANNE: I suppose you're right. I don't have any experience working on a farm. I do pretty well looking after children, though. It's a pity you haven't any for me to look after.

MARILLA: I don't want any more children to look after than I have at the present. You're problem enough as it is. Where did you learn to look after children?

ANNE: In the foster homes I lived in. You see, my mother and father both died of fever when I was three months old. Nobody wanted me, so I went to live with a neighbor named Mrs. Thomas who was poor and had a drunken husband and four children. When I was old enough, it became my job to look after them. When I was eight years old, Mr. Thomas was killed and Mrs. Thomas and her children went to live with her mother. Her mother didn't want me.

MARILLA: Dear child, what became of you then?

ANNE: Well, Mrs. Hammond from up the road said she'd take me, seeing as I was handy with children. Mrs. Hammond had six children—she had twins three times. I like babies in moderation, but twins three times in a row is too much. I told Mrs. Hammond so firmly when the last pair came. Of course, she tore up my behind for saying such a thing.

MARILLA: Oh, dear.

ANNE: I lived with the Hammonds for two years until Mr. Hammond died. Mrs. Hammond divided her children amongst three relatives and moved to the States. I had to go to the orphanage because nobody would take me. They didn't want me at the orphanage, either. They said they were overcrowded but they had to take me, and I was there four months until Mrs. Spencer came.

MARILLA: Were those women—Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Hammond—good to you?

ANNE: Oh, they meant to be. And when people mean to be good to you, you don't always mind when they're not very nice. Besides, they had a good deal to worry about—what with a drunk husband and twins three times in a row—but I'm pretty sure they meant to be good to me.

MARILLA: Anne, I had no idea—

(Matthew enters with Mrs. Spencer and Mrs. Blewett.)

MRS. SPENCER: Marilla, Matthew says there's been a mistake—that you wanted a *boy* from the orphanage.

MARILLA: That's right, Mrs. Spencer.

MRS. SPENCER: I'm dreadfully sorry. I was certain you said you wanted a girl, but I must have been mistaken.

MARILLA: It was our fault. We should have gone to the orphanage ourselves instead of putting the burden on you. Anyhow, the mistake has been made, and the only thing to do now is to set it right. Can we send the child back to the orphanage? I suppose they'll take her back, won't they?

MRS. SPENCER: I suppose so, but I don't think it will be necessary. Mrs. Blewett was just asking me to get her a little girl from the orphanage to help her. She has a large family and finds it hard to get help.

MRS. BLEWETT: I have been known to expect quite a bit from my hired help, and my children do not always behave themselves very well.

MARILLA: I see.

(Mrs. Blewett circles Anne and inspects her.)

MRS. BLEWETT: *(To Anne, sharply.)* How old are you, and what is your name?

ANNE: Anne Shirley, and I'm 11 years old.

MRS. BLEWETT: Humph! You don't look as if there is much to you. *(Lifts Anne's arm, inspects it, and drops it.)* But you're wiry, and the wiry ones are the best, after all. Well, if I take you, you'll have to be a good girl you know—good and smart and respectful. I'll expect you to earn your keep. If not, you will find yourself at the wrong end of a paddle, do you understand?

ANNE: *(Devastated.)* Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BLEWETT: I might as well take her off your hands, Miss Cuthbert. The baby's awfully ornery, and I'm completely worn out from attending to him. If you like, I can take her home right now.

(Matthew quietly pulls Marilla aside.)

MATTHEW: She's such a nice little thing, Marilla. It sure would be a shame to send her to that mean Mrs. Blewett. I wouldn't give that woman my least favorite dog.

MARILLA: Matthew Cuthbert, I believe that child has bewitched you! But what good would she be to us?

MATTHEW: I daresay, we might be of some good to her.

(Pause. Marilla ponders this.)

MARILLA: I'm sorry for the confusion, Mrs. Blewett, but it seems as if Matthew is set on keeping the girl.

MRS. BLEWETT: *(To Mrs. Spencer.)* Well, why did you go and drag me back here? Mrs. Spencer, let me know when you have a girl that I might actually keep. *(Exits.)*

MRS. SPENCER: Well, I'm glad that's settled. Good day, Matthew and Marilla. And a good day to you to, Anne. *(Exits.)*

ANNE: Oh, Mrs. Cuthbert, did you really say that you would let me stay at Green Gables or did I only imagine you did?

MARILLA: I think you'd better learn to control that imagination of yours if you can't distinguish between what is real and what isn't. But, yes, you did hear me say you may come to live with us.

(Anne throws her arms around Marilla, who is taken aback.)

ANNE: Oh, thank you, Miss Cuthbert! You won't be sorry.

MARILLA: *(Disentangles herself from Anne.)* We'll see about that. Only, please, don't call me Miss Cuthbert. You may call me Marilla.

ANNE: *(Dramatic curtsy.)* And you may call me Anne of Green Gables!

MATTHEW: *(To Marilla.)* That's Anne with an "e." Don't forget.

(Anne laughs, picks up her bag, takes Matthew's arm, and exits. Marilla shakes her head and exits as lights fade to black.)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: Kitchen at Green Gables. There is a small table with three chairs. On top of the table is small vase or can with cut flowers in it. A window frame is present. Note: Additional optional items such as a sink or stove may be added. Marilla is seated at the table, working on needlepoint. Rachel enters.)

RACHEL: I've been hearing some surprising things about you and Matthew.

MARILLA: My goodness, Rachel! Would you like to come in and sit down before you tell me what Matthew and I have been doing to startle you so?

(Rachel sits.)

RACHEL: I'm sorry for being so abrupt, Marilla. You know it's just my way.

(Marilla crosses to the stove or a small counter and retrieves a teapot and two cups with saucers.)

MARILLA: *(Chuckles.)* I know, Rachel. And we wouldn't have you any other way.

RACHEL: I was shocked when I learned that Mrs. Spencer had brought back a young girl instead of a boy.

MARILLA: I don't suppose you could be any more surprised than I am now.

RACHEL: What a terrible mistake! Couldn't you have sent her back?

MARILLA: I suppose I could, but we decided not to. Matthew took a fancy to her. And I must say, I like her myself...although she has her faults. The house seems a different place already. She's a real bright little thing.

RACHEL: *(Frowns.)* It's a great responsibility you've taken on, especially when you've never had any experience with children. You don't know much about her, and there's no guessing how a child like that will turn out. *(Notices Marilla looking unhappy. Takes Marilla's hand.)* But I don't want to discourage you, Marilla.

Anne of Green Gables

22

MARILLA: (*Withdraws her hand.*) I'm not feeling discouraged. When I make up my mind to do a thing, it stays made up. (*Stands.*) Now that you've spoken your mind, I'm sure you'd like to see Anne for yourself so that you might share your opinion of her.

(*Rachel sits up straight.*)

RACHEL: (*Brightening.*) Well, if you insist...

MARILLA: I'll call her in. (*Crosses to window. Calls.*) Anne! Anne, please come inside for a moment. (*To Rachel.*) Anne has quite an imagination and has named the trees and rivers all over Green Gables.

RACHEL: How unusual...

(*Anne enters with a skip. She is smiling and flushed and doesn't notice Rachel.*)

ANNE: Oh, Marilla, Green Gables is simply wonderful. I've named the tree outside my bedroom window the Snow Queen because of its beautiful white flowers. And the pond at the bottom of the hill is the Lake of Shining Waters. And the stretch of trees on the way here is the White Way of Delight, and the— (*Sees Rachel.*) Oh, I'm sorry. I've just been going on and on about all of my favorite new places, and I didn't even realize we had company. (*Touches Rachel's arm familiarly.*) One thing you'll get to know about me is that if you don't stop me, I'll just go right on talking until your ears are about ready to fall off...or at least that's what Mrs. Thomas used to say.

MARILLA: Anne, this is our friend and neighbor, Mrs. Lynde. She lives on the other side of the hill.

ANNE: So you live next to that lovely bubbling brook that runs down the hill. I'll have to come over and look at it up close so that I might give it a proper name.

RACHEL: Hush for a minute, dear girl, so that I might get a look at you.

ANNE: (*Confused, holds herself perfectly straight.*) All right, Mrs. Lynde, but I have to warn you, I'm not much to look at.

(*Rachel slowly circles Anne, lifting her arms, her braids, picking up the hem of her dress, etc. Anne tries to watch her do this, and at times turns with Rachel, at which time, Rachel swats her back into place.*)

Anne of Green Gables

25

RACHEL: Well, they didn't pick you for your looks. That's for certain.

ANNE: (*Confused.*) I beg your pardon?

RACHEL: She's terribly skinny and homely, Marilla. (*To Anne.*) Come here, child, and let me get a good look at your face. (*Anne slowly approaches and leans her head close to Rachel. Rachel takes out a handkerchief, "spits" on it, wipes Anne's face, looks down at the handkerchief, and shakes her head.*) My goodness, has anyone ever seen so many freckles?! And hair as red as carrots!

ANNE: (*Furiously stamps feet at intervals throughout speech.*) I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! How dare you call me skinny and ugly? How dare you say I'm freckled and redheaded? You are a rude, impolite, unfeeling woman!

MARILLA: (*Aghast.*) Anne!

(*Anne gets into Rachel's face. Rachel backs up.*)

ANNE: (*To Rachel, enraged.*) How dare you say such things about me? How would you like it if such things were said about you? How would you like to be told that you are fat and clumsy and probably hadn't a spark of imagination in you? I don't care if I hurt your feelings by saying so! I hope I hurt them. You have hurt mine worse than they were ever hurt before. And I'll never forgive you for it, never, never, never! (*Stamps her foot with each "never."*)

RACHEL: (*Angry.*) Well, I, for one, have never seen such a temper!

MARILLA: (*Upset.*) Anne, go to your room and stay there until I call for you.

ANNE: Fine!

(*Anne bursts into tears and runs offstage. Rachel starts to exit.*)

RACHEL: (*To Marilla.*) Well, I don't envy you your job of bringing that up, Marilla.

MARILLA: (*Calmly.*) You shouldn't have made fun of her looks, Rachel.

(*Rachel whirls back around.*)

RACHEL: Marilla Cuthbert, you don't mean to say you're siding with that terrible child after such a horrific display of temper?

MARILLA: No, I'm not trying to make excuses for her. She's been very naughty, and I'll have to give her a talking to about it. But you must remember that she has never been taught right from wrong. And you were too hard on her, Rachel.

(Rachel starts to exit.)

RACHEL: Well, I see that I'll have to be careful what I say after this, Marilla, since the feelings of orphans from goodness knows where have to be considered before anything else.

(Marilla crosses to her.)

MARILLA: Rachel, please...

RACHEL: Oh, no, I'm not vexed. Don't worry yourself. I'm too sorry for you to leave any room with anger in my mind. You have your own trouble with that child. But if you'll take my advice—which I suppose you won't do even though I've brought up ten children—you'll do that "talking to" you mentioned with a fair-sized birch switch. I should think that would be the most effective language for that kind of child. Her temper matches her hair, I guess. *(Turns back to exit.)* Well, good evening, Marilla. Please come and see me whenever you like, but you can't expect me to visit here again if I'm likely to be insulted in such a fashion.

(Rachel exits in a hurry, bumping into Matthew as he enters.)

MATTHEW: *(Looks back at Rachel.)* What was that all about?

MARILLA: Our Anne has decided to display her temper right in front of Rachel Lynde.

MATTHEW: *(Chuckles.)* Oh, dear! What I wouldn't give to have seen that!

MARILLA: I would gladly have changed places with you if I could, but Anne needs to learn that she can't go around talking to adults like that...no matter how much they deserved it. *(Crosses to where Anne went offstage. Calls.)* Anne Shirley, you come down here right this instant! *(Anne enters, dragging her feet and wiping her face.)* Anne, that was a terrible way to behave. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

ANNE: She hadn't any right to call me ugly and redheaded.

MARILLA: And you hadn't any right to fly into such a fury and talk the way you did to her. I am ashamed of you. I wanted you to behave nicely and, instead, you disgraced me.

ANNE: Just imagine how you would feel if someone told you to your face that you were ugly.

MARILLA: I don't think Mrs. Lynde was right in what she said to you. She can be too outspoken, but that is no excuse for your behavior. She was a stranger, and elderly, and my visitor—all three very good reasons why you should have been respectful to her. You were rude and saucy and you must go to her and tell her you are very sorry for your temper and ask her to forgive you.

ANNE: (*Upset.*) I can never do that! You can punish me any way you like, Marilla, but I cannot ask Mrs. Lynde to forgive me.

MARILLA: You must apologize to Mrs. Lynde. Until you are ready to do so, you will stay in your room.

(Anne starts to slowly exit.)

ANNE: I suppose I will stay in my room forever and ever then.

MATTHEW: Why don't you let me talk to her, Marilla? Go down and fetch Mrs. Lynde. She couldn't have gotten very far just yet. Perhaps Anne will feel differently when you get back.

ANNE: Oh, I wouldn't count on that. I am not sorry for what I said, and I never will be.

MARILLA: (*To Matthew.*) Fine, I'll get Rachel. But I doubt you'll have any more luck than I did getting through to Anne!

(Marilla exits. Matthew crosses to Anne and takes her hands.)

MATTHEW: Well, now, Anne, don't you think you'd better do it and get it over with? It'll have to be done sooner or later, you know, for Marilla's a very determined woman...dreadfully determined, Anne. Do it right away, I say, and get it over with. Just smooth it over. That's what I would do.

ANNE: I suppose I could do it for your sake, Matthew. I suppose in some ways I am sorry. And I am ashamed of myself. But it would be so humiliating to tell Mrs. Lynde so.

MATTHEW: It would be so lonesome down here if you were to stay in your room forever.

Anne of Green Gables

26

ANNE: I'd do anything for you, Matthew. If you want me to apologize, I will.

MATHEW: I do, Anne. I promise, it won't hurt one bit.

ANNE: That's what *you* think.

(Marilla enters. Rachel follows and has her arms crossed.)

MARILLA: Well, Anne...is there something you'd like to say to Mrs. Lynde?

(Anne falls to her knees and half-crawls over to Rachel.)

ANNE: *(Dramatically.)* Oh, Mrs. Lynde, I am extremely sorry. I could never express all my sorrow, not if I used up a whole dictionary. I behaved terribly to you, and I've disgraced my dear friends, Matthew and Marilla, who have let me stay at Green Gables even though I am not a boy. I'm a dreadfully wicked and ungrateful girl, and I deserve to be punished and cast out by respectable people forever. It was very wicked of me to fly into a temper because you told me the truth. It was the truth...every word you said was true. My hair is red and I'm freckled and skinny and ugly. *(Thoughtfully.)* What I said to you was true, too, but I shouldn't have said it. Oh, Mrs. Lynde, please, please forgive me. *(Looks up at her and bats her eyes.)* You wouldn't want to inflict a lifelong sorrow on a poor little orphan girl, would you?

(Matthew smiles. Marilla rolls her eyes.)

RACHEL: *(Delighted, extends her hand to Anne.)* There, there, get up, child. Of course, I forgive you. I guess I was a little too hard on you anyway, but I'm such an outspoken person. It can't be denied that your hair is a terrible red, but I knew a girl once whose hair was every bit as red as yours when she was young, but when she grew up it darkened to a really lovely auburn. I wouldn't be surprised if yours did the same.

(Anne stands and hugs Rachel.)

ANNE: Oh, Mrs. Lynde, you have given me hope! Oh, I could endure anything if I only thought my hair would be a lovely shade of auburn when I grew up.

RACHEL: I'll tell you what, Marilla, she may have a quick temper and her hair is awfully red, but I think I like this young girl, and I am not surprised in the least that you wanted to keep her after all. *(Disentangles herself from Anne.)* Now, I really must be on my way. Mrs. Barry is expecting relatives from the States today, and I think I can get a really good look at them from my front porch. Good day. *(Exits.)*

MARILLA: That was quite a performance you put on, Anne.

ANNE: I apologized pretty well, didn't I? I thought since I had to do it, I might as well do it thoroughly.

MATTHEW: *(Chuckles.)* You did it thoroughly, all right.

MARILLA: Let's not discuss this any further then. Anne, I believe you have chores you need to finish up.

ANNE: You know, now that I have a real home, I don't mind doing chores so much. *(Twirls around and hugs herself.)* Oh, Marilla and Matthew, I love Green Gables like I've never loved any place before! *(Exits, skipping.)*

MARILLA: *(Looks after her and smiles.)* I will say it for that child...she's got spunk. It seems as if she's been here always, doesn't it, Matthew? I can't imagine Green Gables without her.

MATTHEW: *(Smiles, smugly.)* Is that so?

MARILLA: *(Crosses her arms, agitated.)* Now, don't give me that I-told-you-so look. I am perfectly willing to own up to the fact that I'm glad I consented to keep the child. You don't have to rub it in. *(Exits in a huff.)*

MATTHEW: *(Smiles and puts his hands on his hips.)* So that's what it feels like to be right.

[END OF FREEVIEW]