

Anne of Green Gables

When an elderly couple decides to adopt a young boy, They get the surprise of their lives.

By L. M. Montgomery • Adapted by Bryon Cahill

Illustrations by Julia Denos



Characters

(main characters in **boldface**)

Narrators 1, 2, 3

Matthew Cuthbert, a farmer

Stationmaster

Anne Shirley, an 11-year-old girl

Marilla Cuthbert, Matthew's sister

Diana Barry, Anne's friend

SCENE 1

Narrator 1: Just north of Nova Scotia in the Gulf of St. Lawrence is Prince Edward Island. On a small, triangular peninsula that juts out from that island is a community called Avonlea. There are many farms in Avonlea, but the farm we are interested in is the one up on the hill—the one known as Green Gables.

Narrator 2: The proprietors of the farm are an elderly brother and sister named Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert. Neither has married or had any children.

Narrator 3: Matthew and Marilla are getting on in years and have decided to adopt a young boy, thinking he can help them around the farm. On this, a gorgeous summer day, Matthew enjoys a slow drive to the train station in his horse-drawn buggy to greet his new son. When he arrives to find no boy in sight, he questions the stationmaster.

Matthew Cuthbert: Excuse me, should the 5:30 train be arriving shortly? I'm expecting a young boy from the orphanage.

Stationmaster: The 5:30 train

has been in and gone half an hour ago. There was only one passenger who got off—a little girl. I told her she could wait inside, but she informed me gravely that she preferred to stay outside. “There was more scope for imagination,” she said. She’s a case, I should say.

Matthew: I don’t understand. We are expecting a boy.

Stationmaster: Well, you’d better question the girl. I daresay she’ll be able to explain. She’s got a tongue of her own, that’s for certain.

Narr 1: The stationmaster finishes locking up the ticket office and walks away.

Narr 2: Matthew approaches the girl cautiously. She is a child of about 11, dressed in a very short, very tight, very ugly dress of yellowish gray. She wears a faded brown sailor hat, and beneath the hat, extending down her back, are two braids of thick red hair.

Anne Shirley: I suppose you are Mr. Matthew Cuthbert of Green Gables. I’m very glad to see you. I was beginning to be afraid you weren’t coming for me, and I was imagining all the things that might have happened to prevent you. I had made up my mind that if you didn’t come tonight, I’d go down to that big wild cherry tree at the bend and climb up into it and stay all night. I wouldn’t be a bit afraid, and it would be lovely to sleep in a wild cherry tree all white with bloom in the moonshine, don’t you think?

Narr 3: Looking into the child’s glowing eyes, Matthew decides

that he cannot tell her that there has been a mistake.

Matthew: I’m sorry I was late. Come along. The horse is over in the yard. Give me your bag.

Anne: Oh, I can carry it. It isn’t heavy. I’ve got all my worldly goods in it, but it isn’t heavy. Oh, I’m very glad you’ve come, even if it would have been nice to sleep in a wild cherry tree.

Narr 1: Matthew leads Anne to his buggy, and together they ride to Green Gables. For the entire trip, Anne talks nonstop about the beauty of nature all around them.

SCENE 2

Narr 2: When Matthew and Anne arrive at Green Gables, Marilla comes briskly out of the house to meet them.

Marilla Cuthbert: Matthew Cuthbert, who’s that? Where is the boy?

Matthew: There wasn’t any boy. There was only her.

Anne: You don’t want me! I might have expected it. Nobody’s ever wanted me! I might have known it was all too beautiful to last. Oh, what shall I do? I’m going to burst into tears!

Marilla: 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 to come to a place you thought was going to be home and found that the people didn’t want you because you weren’t a boy! Oh, this is the most *tragic* thing that has

ever happened to me!

Narr 3: Something like a reluctant smile, rather rusty from long disuse, mellows Marilla’s grim expression.

Marilla: Well, don’t cry anymore. We’re not going to turn you away tonight. What’s your name?

Anne: Will you please call me Cordelia?

Marilla: Is that your name?

Anne: Well, no, not exactly, but I would love to be called Cordelia. It’s such a perfectly elegant name.

Marilla: I don’t know what on earth you mean. If Cordelia isn’t your name, then what is?

Anne: Anne Shirley. But, oh, won’t you please call me Cordelia? It can’t matter much to you what you call me if I’m only going to be here a little while. And Anne is such an unromantic name!

Marilla: Unromantic fiddlesticks! Anne is a good, plain, sensible name! Come inside now. We’ll figure this all out in the morning.

SCENE 3

Narr 1: That night, Anne sleeps uneasily in the guest room while Matthew and Marilla discuss the matter in the kitchen.

Marilla: Well, this is a pretty kettle of fish! This girl will have to go back to the orphanage tomorrow.

Matthew: Yes, I suppose so.

Marilla: You *suppose* so! Don’t

you know it?

Matthew: Well, now, she’s a really nice little thing, Marilla. It’s kind of a pity to send her back when she’s so set on staying.

Marilla: You don’t mean to say we ought to keep her!

Matthew: We might be some good to her.

Marilla: Matthew Cuthbert, I believe the child has **bewitched** you! There’s something I don’t understand about her. We’ll have to send her back tomorrow.

Matthew: Well, now, it’s just as you say, of course, Marilla. I’m going to bed.

Narr 2: Matthew rises from his chair and walks off to his room. Marilla sits at the table and continues to consider the young girl.

SCENE 4

Narr 3: In the morning, Anne goes down to the kitchen to join Matthew and Marilla for breakfast.

Anne: Perhaps you think it doesn’t make any difference to me that you’re not going to keep me, but it does. However, I am not in the depths of despair this morning. The world doesn’t seem such a howling wilderness as it did last night. I’m so glad it’s a sunshiny morning. But I like rainy mornings really well too. All sorts of mornings are interesting, don’t you think? You don’t

vocab

BEWITCHED: charmed, as if by magic

KINDRED: of a similar nature

know what’s going to happen through the day, and there’s so much scope for the imagination. It’s all very well to read about sorrows and imagine yourself living through them heroically, but it’s not so nice when you really come to have them, is it?

Marilla: For pity’s sake, hold your tongue. You talk entirely too much for a little girl.



?For pity’s sake, hold your tongue. You talk entirely too much for a little girl!

Narr 1: Anne eats her breakfast in silence.

Marilla: Can you wash the dishes right?

Anne: Pretty well. I’m better at looking after children, though.

Marilla: Well, there certainly won’t be any more children around here. *You’re* problem enough, and Matthew is a most ridiculous man.

Narr 2: Matthew, who has been quiet this whole time, looks up

as if he is about to say something.

Anne: I think Matthew is lovely! He is so very sympathetic. He doesn’t mind how much I talk. I felt he was a **kindred** spirit as soon as I saw him.

Marilla: Well, you’re both strange enough, if that’s what you mean by “kindred spirit.”

Narr 3: Anne goes to the sink to wash the dishes. When she is finished, she retreats up the stairs to the room in which she slept the night before.

Narr 1: Marilla and Matthew have a conversation about Anne and decide that, even though they had originally wanted a boy, they will keep the girl.

Narr 2: Marilla calls Anne back down to tell her the news.

Marilla: Matthew and I have decided to keep you, Anne.

That is, if you will try to be a good girl and show yourself grateful. Why, child, whatever is the matter now?

Anne: I’m crying. I can’t think why. I am as glad as can be. Oh, *glad* doesn’t seem the right word at all. Oh, it’s something much more than glad!

Narr 3: Anne suddenly pauses with a serious thought on her mind.

Anne: Marilla, do you think I should ever have a best friend here in Avonlea? A really kindred spirit to whom I can confide my innermost soul? I’ve dreamed of meeting her all my life.

Marilla: Well, Diana Barry lives over in Orchard Slope. She’s a very nice little girl.

Anne: What is Diana like?

Marilla: She is a very pretty girl. And she is good and smart, which is better than being pretty. Perhaps you can call on her when she returns from visiting her aunt.

Anne: Well, I cannot wait to meet her—Diana Barry, my best friend! She will see that I am tall and regal, clad in a gown of trailing white lace. My hair is midnight darkness, and my name is Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald.

Marilla: You're only Anne of Green Gables. And it's much nicer to be Anne of Green Gables than Anne of nowhere in particular, is it not?

Narr 1: Anne smiles and runs out the door to explore the outside world of her new home.

SCENE 5

Narr 2: A few weeks go by, and Anne becomes a part of Avonlea. Her imagination carries her away on many occasions.

Narr 3: One day, Anne learns that Diana Barry has returned from her stay at her aunt's house. Anne and Marilla plan to visit the Barry home so that the girls can meet. When they arrive, Anne and Diana like each other right away. They run outside to play while Marilla and Mrs. Barry stay behind.

Anne: Oh, Diana, do you think you can like me enough to be my best friend?

Diana Barry: Why, I guess so. I'm awfully glad you came to Green Gables. It will be jolly to have someone to play with.



Anne: Will you swear to be my friend forever and ever?

Diana: How do you do it?

Anne: We must join hands.

Narr 1: Anne takes Diana's hand.

Anne: I'll say the **oath** first: I solemnly swear to be faithful to my best friend, Diana Barry, as long as the sun and moon shall endure. Now you say it, and put my name in it.

Narr 2: Diana repeats the oath.

Diana: You're a strange girl, Anne. But I believe I'm going to like you really well.

Narr 3: Later, at home, Anne tells Marilla and Matthew about her new best friend.

Anne: Oh, I'm the happiest girl on Prince Edward Island right now! Diana is indeed a kindred spirit! Her birthday is in February, and mine is in March. Don't you think that is a strange coincidence? Diana is going to lend me a book to read. She says it's perfectly splendid and *tremenjusly* exciting. She's going to show me a place back in the woods where lilies grow. Don't you think Diana has got very soulful eyes? I wish I had soulful eyes. I'm an inch taller than Diana. We're going to the shore someday to gather shells. We have agreed to call the spring down by the log bridge the Dryad's Bubble. Isn't that a perfectly elegant name? I read

vocab

OATH: a spoken promise

FUTILE: unsuccessful

a story once about a spring called that. A dryad is a sort of grown-up fairy, I think.

Marilla: Well, I just hope you won't talk Diana to death.

Matthew: Oh, Anne, I heard you mention last week that you like chocolates, so I got you some today.

?You're a
strange girl
Anne. But
I believe I'm
going to like
you really well?

Narr 1: Matthew extends his hand and his chocolate gift to her. Anne smiles at Matthew and then surprises him by running to him and wrapping her arms around him. Marilla tries her best to hold back her own smile, but it is a **futile** attempt.

SCENE 6

Narr 2: The fall comes, and it is time for Anne to start school. She walks to school with her best friend, Diana.

Anne: What a splendid day, Diana! Isn't it good just to be alive on a day like this? I pity the people who aren't born yet for missing it. They may have good days, of course, but they can never have this one. Dear old world, you are lovely, and I am glad to be alive in you.

Narr 3: When she gets to school, however, Anne's mood quickly sours. A boy named Gilbert

Blythe makes fun of her red hair, and Anne makes a vow to never forgive him for as long as she lives.

Narr 1: As it turns out, Gilbert is one of the smartest students in the school. Anne decides to forever prove that she is more intelligent.

Narr 2: On their walk home from school, Anne confides in Diana.

Anne: I shall never forgive Gilbert Blythe.

Diana: You mustn't mind Gilbert for making fun of your hair. Why, he makes fun of all the girls' hair. He laughs at mine because it's so black. He's called me a crow a dozen times, and I've never heard him apologize for anything. Besides, don't you think he is handsome?

Anne: Well, I certainly don't see what *that* has to do with anything.

Anne: Well, I certainly don't see what *that* has to do with anything.

SCENE 7

Narr 3: One night, Marilla is away at a town political function. Anne and Matthew sit together in the living room. Anne is doing her homework. Matthew is reading a newspaper.

Anne: What way do you vote, Matthew?

Matthew: Conservative.

Anne: Then I'm a conservative too. My schoolmate Ruby Gillis says that when a boy is courting a girl, he always has to agree with the girl's mother in religion and her father in politics. Is that true, Matthew?

Matthew: Well, now, I dunno.

Anne: Did you ever go courting, Matthew?

Matthew: Well, now, I don't suppose I ever did.

Anne: It must be rather interesting, don't you think, Matthew? Ruby says that when she grows up, she's going to have ever so many **beaux** on a string and have them all crazy about her, but I don't think that would be too exciting. I'd rather have just one in his right mind.

Narr 1: Anne, deep in thought, is silent for a minute.

Anne: There are a great many things in this world that I can't understand very well, Matthew.

Matthew: Well, now, I dunno as I comprehend them all myself.

Anne: Well, I suppose I'll finish up my lessons. My friend Jane lent me a book I am just dying to dive into. But I don't dare open it up until I'm through with my work. But it's a terrible temptation, Matthew. Jane said she cried herself sick over it. I love a book that makes me cry.

Narr 2: Matthew lays a hand upon Anne's shoulder and whispers a bit of advice in her ear.

Matthew: (*whispering*) Don't ever give up your romance, Anne. A little of it is a good thing. Not too much, of course—but do keep a little of it, Anne ... keep a little of it.

SCENE 8

Narr 3: One day, Diana has a party. Anne and a couple of other girls from school go to Diana's house. They are all

standing around outside when they begin a game of dares. Carrie Sloane dares Ruby Gillis to climb a willow tree. Ruby does. Then Josie Pye dares Jane Andrews to hop on her left leg around the garden without stopping once. Jane does.

Narr 1: As the dares go round and round, they start becoming more dangerous. Josie dares Anne to walk on the **ridgepole** of Diana's house.

Diana: Don't do it, Anne! You'll fall and be killed!

Anne: I must do it. My honor is at stake. I shall walk that ridgepole, Diana, or perish in the attempt. If I am killed, you may have my pearl bead ring.

?I love a book
that makes
me cry.?

Narr 2: Anne climbs up to the roof and walks along the ridgepole. For a few moments, she does fine. But then she loses her balance, stumbles, and falls. She slides down the roof and crashes into a bush on the ground.

Diana: Anne, are you killed? Oh, Anne, dear, speak just one word to me and tell me you aren't killed.

Anne: No, Diana, I am not killed. But ... ouch ... my ankle. Oh, Diana, please find your father and ask him to take me home.

Narr 3: Diana runs off to get her father. She returns with him, and he lifts Anne and carries her in his arms all the way to Green Gables.

A procession of girls follows him.

Narr 1: When the girls arrive at Anne's home, Marilla is in the orchard picking apples. She sees them coming, and a stab of fear pierces her heart. In this moment, Marilla realizes just how much Anne means to her.

Anne: Don't be frightened, Marilla. I was walking on the ridgepole, and I fell off. I expect I've sprained my ankle, but it could have been a broken neck!

Marilla: I might have known you'd go and do something foolish at that party!

Narr 2: Mr. Barry brings Anne inside the house. She lies on the sofa, and Marilla attends to her. Mr. Barry and the girls leave.

Anne: Aren't you very sorry for me, Marilla?

Marilla: It was your own fault.

Anne: And that is *why* you should be sorry for me. Because the thought that it *is* all my own fault is what makes it so hard! But what would you have done, Marilla, if you had been dared to walk along the ridgepole?

Marilla: I'd have stayed on good, firm ground and let them dare away! Such absurdity!

Anne: Oh, Marilla. You have such strength of mind! Oh, I am an afflicted mortal. Please don't be cross with me, Marilla.

vocab

BEAUX: boyfriends

RIDGEPOLE: The highest timber on a roof

PRESTIGIOUS: having a highly honored reputation



Marilla: There, there; I'm not cross. Just try to keep your head about you from now on.

SCENE 9

Narr 3: Anne's ankle heals, and the months pass quickly. Soon it is Christmastime. Matthew buys Anne the prettiest dress she has ever laid eyes on. She lavishes Matthew with gratitude and kisses.

Narr 1: More time passes. Soon, Anne finds herself graduating at the top of her class. She even wins a very **prestigious** award called the Avery Scholarship. She is at the absolute peak of her happiness and spends the day reflecting in the orchard and at Dryad's Bubble.

Narr 2: In the evening, Anne returns to the farm to find Matthew breathing heavily at his work.

Anne: You've been working too hard today, Matthew. Why won't you take things easier?

Matthew: Well, now, I can't seem to. It's only that I'm getting old, Anne, and keep forgetting to.

Anne: If I had been the boy you originally sent for, I'd be able to help you so much now and spare you in a hundred ways. I could find it in my heart to wish I had been, just for that.

Matthew: Well, now, I'd rather have you than a dozen boys, Anne. And it wasn't a boy who received the Avery Scholarship, was it? It was a girl—my girl—my girl whom I'm proud of.

Narr 3: Matthew smiles his shy smile at Anne and then walks back to the house. Anne takes

the memory with her back to her room. She sits at her open window for a long time, thinking about her past and dreaming about her future. She will always remember the silvery, peaceful beauty and fragrant calm of the night.

SCENE 10

Narr 1: The next morning, Anne walks into the kitchen to find Marilla helping Matthew into a chair.

Marilla: Matthew—Matthew—what is it? Matthew, are you sick?

Narr 2: Anne runs to get the doctor. But when they come back, it is too late. Matthew is gone.

Narr 3: The doctor assures them that Matthew's death was instantaneous and probably painless. But the knowledge does not ease Anne's or Marilla's pain. In the evening, Marilla and Anne huddle together for strength.

Marilla: Oh, Anne. My girl—my girl whom I'm so proud of. There, there. Don't cry. It can't bring him back.

Anne: Oh, just let me cry, Marilla. The tears don't hurt as much as the ache. Just stay here a little while, and keep your arm around me. I can't cry to Diana about it. She's

vocab

MOURNING: a period of time reserved for grief and sorrow

ARTICULATE: having a clear, expressive manner of speaking; eloquent

ENTICING: tempting, tantalizing



“Oh, just let me cry, Marilla. The tears don't hurt as much as the ache.”

good and kind and sweet—but it's not her sorrow. She's outside of it, and she couldn't come close enough to my heart to help me. It's our sorrow—yours and mine. Oh, Marilla, what will we do without him?

Marilla: We've got each other, Anne. I don't know what I'd do if you weren't here—if you'd never come. Oh, Anne, I know I've been strict and

harsh with you, but you mustn't think I didn't love you as much as Matthew did. I want to tell you now, when I can. It's never been easy for me to say things out of my heart, but at times like this, it's easier. I love you as dear as if you were my own flesh and blood, and you've been my joy and comfort since you came to Green Gables.

Narr 1: Anne and Marilla hold

COURTESY OF THE ANNE OF GREEN GABLES MUSEUM, PARK CORNER, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

each other and cry deep into the night.

Narr 2: The next day comes and goes. The **mourning** process takes its toll. But life goes on at Green Gables. The joys of sincere work, worthy aspiration, and congenial friendship lie before Anne. Nothing is going to rob her of her bright fancy or her ideal world of dreams. ■



Anne has many more adventures in *L. M. Montgomery's classic novel Anne of Green Gables*. It is the first of seven books in a series. Read them all!

WRITE ABOUT IT

Anne Shirley lives in the rural, small-town world of 1906. Suppose you could transport her to your own place and time—using that old sci-fi standby, a time machine. How would she react to your world?

Write a short story in which you bring the teenage Anne of 1906 to your school. Include dialogue that sounds true to her manner of speaking.

Then send your story to us at word@weeklyreader.com. We'll post our favorites on our blog, **WORD**, at readandwriting.com.

Before Green Gables

L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, published in 1908, begins with the orphaned child's arrival at Canada's Prince Edward Island. But what was Anne Shirley's life like before she came to live with Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert? A treat lies in store for fans who have always longed to find out.

Just in time for the 100th anniversary of the publication of Montgomery's classic, Penguin Canada has commissioned award-winning Canadian author Budge Wilson to write a prequel.

Before Green Gables, to be published in 2008, will tell the story of Anne's experiences in foster homes and an orphanage. It will also introduce readers to her parents and to the people who opened Anne's eyes to the magic of words and literature.

“Given the appalling deprivation and emotional starvation of Anne's years in the [foster homes] and during her four agonized months in the orphanage, one is mystified as to how she became the person she was when she made her first journey to Green Gables,” says Wilson. “How could she have become so vibrant a person, ... so **articulate**, so optimistic, so full of extravagant dreams? This was the **enticing** puzzle that drew me into the project.”

Wilson knows she has big shoes to fill. “I will, of course, try to be true to the astonishing character that Lucy Maud Montgomery created,” she says. “For this, I am grateful to her. But I would not—in fact, could not—presume to tell my part of Anne's history in Montgomery's voice. I will do this in my own voice, hoping that she would approve of the project if she were alive today.”

Ultimately, fans will be the judges of this forthcoming work. Meanwhile, Montgomery's family has placed its stamp of approval on this effort. “We think [Wilson] is a terrific choice,” says Montgomery's grandson David Macdonald. “It's an added bonus that ... Wilson, like Anne, comes from Nova Scotia. I think my grandmother would have thought it appropriate for an author who grew up in Nova Scotia to write about Anne's life before she came to Prince Edward Island and Green Gables.”



MARIAN HEIBEL RICHARDSON