

ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

*Based on the novel by L. M. Montgomery
Adapted by Anita Larsen*

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STORY OF THE PLAY

When elderly Marilla Cuthbert and her shy brother Matthew decide to adopt an orphan to help with farm work, they expect a boy to arrive at the train station. Instead, a talkative, imaginative girl with fiery red hair and a taste for romance shows up—Anne (with an E) Shirley. What use will she be to them? asks reserved Marilla, but tender-hearted Matthew feels they might be of some use to Anne. It turns out that all three are much more than useful to one another—they're as vital as breathing.

In joyful, hilarious adventures familiar to generations of readers of the beloved classic novel, Anne apologizes to neighbor Rachel Lynde, finds a bosom friend in Diana Barry, (and later inadvertently gets her drunk), saves Diana's little sister, deals with the loss of Marilla's amethyst brooch, meets Gilbert Blythe, bemoans her hair, falls off a roof (sort of), and nearly drowns.

The theatricality of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" is utilized throughout to bolster the universal truths and give the characters warmth and human believability, rather than being forced into stereotypes or caricatures. Thus, Marilla becomes Wilder's Stage Manager in that she directs the audience, while remaining a character that in no way directs the story. Anne and her young friends handle that. Stagehands sometimes speak, but for the most part maintain conventional invisibility. A heartwarming adaptation.

Anne of Green Gables

- 3 -

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(13 m, 14 w, 5 flexible, extras)

FEMALES:

ANNE SHIRLEY: Matures from 11 to 16 years old. (May be played by two actresses.)

MARILLA CUTHBERT: Middle-aged woman.

RACHEL LYNDE: Neighbor lady.

JOSIE PYE: 11-years-old. Fifth grade student.

RUBY GILLIS: 11-years-old. Fifth grade student.

JANE ANDREWS: 11-years-old. Fifth grade student.

MRS. BARRY: Neighbor. Diana's mother.

DIANA BARRY: Fifth-grade student. Befriends Anne.

MINNIE MAY BARRY: Diana's sister, age 5.

PRISSY ANDREWS: Teenaged student.

ELLIE BOULTER: Second-grade student.

MISS STACY: New teacher.

GIRL MUSICIAN: Optional.

MALES:

MATTHEW CUTHBERT: Middle-aged man.

GILBERT BLYTHE: Fifth-grade student.

MR. PHILLIPS: School teacher.

PEDDLER: Sells hair dye to Anne.

DR. BLAIR: Local physician.

MARTIN ROSS: Handyman at Green Gables.

ICE CREAM MAN: Sells ice cream at church social.

MOODY SPURGEON MACPHERSON: Fifth-grade student.

CHARLIE SLOANE: Fifth-grade student.

BOY IN CLASS #1: Fifth-grade student.

BOY IN CLASS #2: Fifth-grade student.

TOMMY SLOANE: Second-grade student.

TIMMY ANDREWS: Second-grade student.

FLEXIBLE:

BOSS STAGEHAND (*Boss SH*)

STAGEHANDS 1 - 4 (*SH 1-4*)

EXTRAS:

1 MALE VOICE

TOWNSPEOPLE

STUDENTS

DOUBLING: See options for doubling next page.

OPTIONS FOR DOUBLING

Anne may be played by two girls: Young Anne and Young Adult Anne. If cast in this manner, Young Adult Anne's role begins when she meets Peddler.

Tommy and Timmy may be played by girls dressed as boys.

Minnie Mae Barry / Ellie Boulter

Ice Cream Man / Dr. Blair / Martin Ross / Mr. Phillips

Miss Stacy / Townsperson at picnic

Tommy Sloane / Townsperson at picnic

Timmy Andrews / Townsperson at picnic

The following characters may also be a townsperson at the picnic and the Christmas concert: Boss Stagehand, Stagehands 1-4, Rachel Lynde, Prissy Andrews, Dr. Blair, Martin Ross, Mr. Phillips.

NOTES ON STAGING

All action takes place on or near Prince Edward Island, Canada, in the early 1900s. There are three acting areas: the Green Gables kitchen; Avonlea schoolroom; and other locations played on the surrounding stage including apron and the floor below.

SR – Stage Right

DR – Down Stage Right

CR – Center Stage Right

UR – Up Stage Right

SL – Stage Left

DL – Down Stage Left

CL – Center Stage Left

UL – Up Stage Left

(When there is possible confusion the standard shorthand is expanded, as DR Kitchen or DRC apron.).

See end of script for detailed descriptions of sets, costumes, props, and sound effects.

ACT I

(AT RISE: The CURTAIN is closed. SPOTLIGHT DR on apron. MARILLA CUTHBERT enters DR.)

ANNE SHIRLEY: *(Offstage calls.)* Marilla! *(MARILLA looks USC.)* May I run over to Diana's? Her signal is imperative.

MARILLA CUTHBERT: *(Calls.)* Use short words, Anne. You may go - ten minutes, mind. *(To audience.)* I remember that from years ago, just after Anne came. She was eleven then, and this is her story. *(Crosses DSC as the LIGHTS cross-fade. SPOTLIGHT out, apron LIGHTS up.)* Our farm - Green Gables - is behind that curtain. Pretty much all of Avonlea is there or in spots of light here and there. Mind, this isn't the place for you if you need to see a fish to know a fish. If you can use your imagination, you'll do fine.

(SFX: TRAIN WHISTLE. SH3 enters DR, blows wooden train whistle, exits DR.)

MARILLA: *(Continued.)* That's her train. Time to get started.

(SHE exits through curtains CS. SH1 and 2 enter DR with bench, set it DCR apron. ANNE enters DR with shabby carpetbag. She wears long socks, scruffy dark boots, a too-small dress under a dingy white pinafore. Red braids fall from a faded brown sailor hat. She smiles at SH1 and SH2. They nod back, exit DR. She looks around. Nobody's here. Crosses DC, pulls paper slip from pinafore pocket.)

ANNE: Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert. Frightfully unromantic names!

(MATTHEW enters DR, eyes ANNE.)

MATTHEW CUTHBERT: *(To himself.)* Well, now *(Exits DR.)*

Anne of Green Gables

- 6 -

ANNE: *(To herself.)* Matthew de Coverley, King of all Saxony—that's romantic! Lady Marilla Manders ... daughter of a belted earl.

(ANNE re-pockets paper, looks back. Still no one. Sighs, crosses to bench, sits, places carpetbag on lap, folds hands atop carpetbag. MATTHEW enters DR before curtain. Anne jumps up.)

ANNE: I suppose you are Mr. Matthew Cuthbert of Green Gables? I'm ecstatic to see you. *(Extends hand.)* I made up my mind if you didn't come for me tonight, I'd go down the track to that big wild cherry tree at the bend and climb up and stay all night. *(MATTHEW shyly takes her hand.)* It would be lovely to sleep in a tree all white with bloom in the moonshine, don't you think? I could imagine I was dwelling in marble halls. And I was quite sure you'd come for me in the morning.

MATTHEW: *(Disengages hand.)* Horse is in the yard. I'll take your bag.

ANNE: Oh, no. I know how to carry it so the handle doesn't pull out. I'm told we must drive eight miles. I love long drives! How magnificent that I'm going to belong to you!

MATTHEW: Well, now, I don't rightly—

ANNE: *(Interrupts.)* I've never really belonged to anybody. The orphan asylum was the worst. No scope for the imagination.

(SHE exits DR. MATTHEW hesitates, then follows.)

ANNE: *(Offstage.)* What a lovely horse! *(SFX: hooves.)* Strong too. Though I'm not much weight. I'm so skinny there's not a pick on my bones.

MATTHEW: *(Offstage.)* Bess, haw.

(ANNE and MATTHEW enter DR. They mime riding in a buggy. Anne rides DS, holds carpetbag; Matthew rides US, mimes holding reins. They cross DL as they speak.)

End of Freeview

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