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*Dramatic Publishing*

**Anne of  
Green  
Gables**

**by  
R.N. Sandberg**

**adapted from  
L.M. Montgomery's novel**

**full-length version**

# Anne of Green Gables

A faithful, unsentimental dramatization of the first part of the beloved classic. Commissioned and premiered by Seattle Children's Theatre.

**Comedy/Drama. Adapted by R.N. Sandberg. From the novel by L.M. Montgomery. Cast: 3m., 5w., with doubling, or up to 11 (4m., 4w., 1 boy, 2 girls).** Marilla Cuthbert and her brother Matthew request an orphan boy to help work their farm but are mistakenly sent the high-spirited, red-headed Anne Shirley. Knowing they are ill equipped to raise a child, Marilla attempts to send Anne back to the orphanage. With Matthew lobbying to keep Anne, Marilla ultimately agrees to let her stay at Green Gables. The trials and tribulations Marilla fears come to pass as Anne insults Marilla's best friend, "loses" Marilla's most cherished brooch, smacks the school's prize pupil with a slate, and inadvertently gets her best friend Diana drunk on cherry cordial. She also turns out to be bright, charming and resourceful, full of irresistible imagination. Marilla and Matthew admit she is the best thing that ever happened to them, and Anne comes to understand she is a loved, worthwhile person. *Main setting is Green Gables with various locations around Avonlea to be suggested. Turn-of-the-20th-century costumes.* Code: AE5

ISBN-10 1-58342-756-2  
ISBN-13 978-1-58342-756-9



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Anne of Green Gables  
(Sandberg)



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Adapted by

**R.N.SANDBERG**

From the novel by

**L.M.MONTGOMERY**



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(ANNE OF GREEN GABLES)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-756-9

**Commissioned and premiered by the  
SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE**

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## Characters

Anne Shirley, an orphan

Marilla Cuthbert, a spinster

Matthew Cuthbert, her bachelor brother

Diana Barry, a young girl

Gilbert Blythe, a young boy

Mrs. Barry, Diana's mother \*\*\*

Mrs. Lynde/Mrs. Blewett \*\*\*

Stationmaster/Mr. Phillips, the schoolteacher/Doctor

\*\*\* An alternative to this doubling is provided in the back of the playbook. In the alternative, Mrs. Barry is doubled with Mrs. Blewett.

Setting Primarily, Green Gables - a unit with dining room and Anne's room, all surrounded by trees and flowers.

Various other locations in Avonlea, a small town on Prince Edward Island, Canada, about 1900.

# ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

## ACT I

### Scene 1

The dining room at Green Gables. Marilla is setting the table as Rachel Lynde bursts in.

- RACHEL: Marilla, is Matthew ill? I saw him heading for town. He's not off to the doctor's is he?
- MARILLA: He's gone to the train station, Rachel. We're getting a little boy from the orphan asylum in Nova Scotia.
- RACHEL: You can't be in earnest.
- MARILLA: Yes, of course I am. We've been thinkin about it for some time. You know how hard it is to get hired help.
- RACHEL: Yes, but -
- MARILLA: Mrs. Peter Blewett's bringing him on the 5:30 train. She was going to the orphanage to pick up a girl for her cousin, so we just told her to pick us up a boy.
- RACHEL: Well, Marilla, I'll just tell you plain that I think you're doing a mighty foolish thing. You're bringing a strange child into your house and you don't know a single thing about him. Why, it was only last week I read in the paper how a man and his wife up west of the Island took a boy out of an orphan asylum and he set fire to the house - set it on purpose, Marilla - nearly burnt them to a crisp in their beds.
- MARILLA: There's risks in pretty near everything a body does in this world.
- RACHEL: But this.
- MARILLA: Matthew was terrible set on it. You know he seldom sets his mind on anything, so when he does I always feel I ought to give in to it.



RACHEL: You and your brother don't know a thing about bringing up a child.

MARILLA: Neither do people who have their own when they start. Anyway, this boy's from Nova Scotia, right close to the Island. It isn't as if we're getting him from England or the States. He can't be much different from ourselves.

RACHEL: I heard of an orphan child over in New Brunswick who put strychnine in the well and the whole family died in fearful agonies. And in that instance it was a girl.

MARILLA: Well, we're not getting a girl. I wouldn't dream of taking a girl to bring up. We need someone to help work this farm.

RACHEL: Well, I hope it turns out all right. Only don't say I didn't warn you if Green Gables burns down or you die of strychnine.

MARILLA: I appreciate your concern, Rachel.

*(The lights crossfade as the sound of a train whistle fades away in the distance.)*

### Scene 2

Avonlea Station. A small figure, a child, sits on a battered suitcase. The child wears a too large overcoat and a cap covering its head. We can see only the child's back as the lights come up. The child wraps the coat more tightly around itself and turns towards us for the first time: she is a girl, a simple, tattered dress under her coat. The Stationmaster comes to pick up a mailbag and notices the girl.

STATIONMASTER: Now, look, my girl, we've got a Ladies Waiting Room, and that's where you ought to be. You've been out here long enough.

ANNE: I prefer to stay outside. There's more scope for imagination. *(Looking off)* Like with that wild cherry tree. If no one comes for me, that's where I'll sleep

tonight. All white with bloom in the moonshine. I'll imagine I'm dwelling in marble halls. *(Pointing off)* Oh, look, look at it now - as the wind's blown it. What does it make you think of?

STATIONMASTER: A cherry tree blowing in the wind.

ANNE: My goodness, no!

STATIONMASTER: And all the fruit that'll fall off and be squashed. What a mess I'll have to clean up.

ANNE: It looks just like a bride! With a lovely misty veil. I've never seen one but I can imagine what she would look like. I don't ever expect to be a bride myself. I'm too homely. But I hope that someday I shall have a white dress. That is my highest ideal of earthly bliss.

*(An older man, very tentative and shy enters. He stands diffidently off to the side looking around for something at first, then focuses in on Anne and hears her last few lines.)*

STATIONMASTER: *(Sees the man and goes to him)* About time you got here, Matthew.

MATTHEW: Will the 5:30 train be long?

STATIONMASTER: Been in and gone half an hour. *(Indicating Anne)* There she is. *(Confidentially)* She's a case. Got a tongue runs longer than a freight train to Ottawa.

MATTHEW: *(Puzzled)* Is Mrs. Peter Blewett about?

STATIONMASTER: Couldn't wait. Had to get the other girl to her cousin's. Said you and your sister were adopting this one.

MATTHEW: *(More puzzled still)* I was expecting a boy.

STATIONMASTER: Well, she's not a boy, Matthew, and I don't have any more orphans concealed around here.

ANNE: Excuse me, are you Mr. Matthew Cuthbert of Green Gables?

STATIONMASTER: *(To Anne)* Looks like you won't be sleeping in the trees after all. *(To Matthew)* Good luck, Matthew. *(Exits.)*

ANNE: 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. It's so wonderful that I'm going to live with you. I've never belonged to anybody - not really. I feel pretty nearly perfectly happy. I can't feel exactly perfectly happy because - well, *(She sets down her bag and pulls off her hat)* What color would you call this? *(She holds out one of her braids.)*

MATTHEW: It's red, ain't it?

ANNE: Yes, it's red. Now, you see why I can't be perfectly happy. I cannot imagine that red hair away. I do my best. I think to myself, "Now my hair is a glorious black, black as the raven's wing." But all the time, I know it's just plain red, and it breaks my heart. It will be my lifelong sorrow. *(She picks up her bag. Matthew does not move.)* Shouldn't we be going?

MATTHEW: Well, now, you see, I'm confused about that.

ANNE: *(A moment of fear)* Is it because I'm talking too much? People are always telling me I do. Would you rather I didn't talk? If you say so I'll stop. Could we go if I do? I can stop when I make up my mind to it, although it's difficult.

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

ANNE: Oh, I'm so glad. It's such a relief to talk when one wants and not be told that children should be seen and not heard. Shall we go? *(Matthew doesn't answer. Her voice trembles.)* We are going to Green Gables, aren't we?

**MATTHEW:** Well, now, you see - *(Anne clutches her bag. She is terrified.)* You're not like other girls, are you? Not like girls around here.

**ANNE:** I don't know. I guess I'm not. But I do have my good points. I'm sure you'll find them out once you get to know me.

**MATTHEW:** Well, now, I expect that's so. All right. Come on.

**ANNE:** *(As they start to go)* Have you ever imagined what it must feel like to be divinely beautiful?

**MATTHEW:** *(His voice trailing off in the distance)* Well, now, no, I haven't.

*(The lights are cross fading back to the dining room.)*

### Scene 3

Green Gables. Marilla sits anxiously at the table. We hear Anne talking before she and Matthew enter.

**ANNE:** This Island is the bloomiest place! But those red roads are so funny. *(As they enter)* What does make the roads so red?

**MATTHEW:** Well, now, I dunno.

**ANNE:** Well, that is one of the things to find out, sometime. Isn't it? *(Sees the house for the first time)* Oh, I must be in a dream.

*(Matthew goes into the dining room. Marilla looks at him and Anne. Anne takes off her cap.)*

**ANNE:** Hello.

**MARILLA:** *(To Matthew)* Where's the boy?

**MATTHEW:** There wasn't any boy.

**MARILLA:** There must have been a boy. We sent word to bring a boy.

MATTHEW: There was only her.

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 known it was all too beautiful to last. I might have known nobody really did want me. *(She bursts into tears.)*

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 you came 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 tragical thing that ever happened to me.

MARILLA: *(An almost imperceptible smile tries to force itself onto her face.)* Well, don't cry anymore. We're not going to turn you out of doors tonight. We'll investigate this affair, tomorrow. *(Anne's sniffles are subsiding.)* What's your name?

*(Anne composes herself, becoming quite serious.)*

ANNE: Will you please call me Cordelia?

MARILLA: Is that your name?

ANNE: No-o-o, not exactly. 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 oh, please do 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, can it? And Anne is such an unromantic name.

MARILLA: Unromantic fiddlesticks! Ann is a good plain sensible name and that's what I'll call you.

- ANNE:** Well, then, could you 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. When you hear a name, can’t you always see it in your mind? A-n-n looks dreadful, but A-n-n-e looks so much more distinguished. If you’ll only call me Anne spelled with an “e,” I shall try to reconcile myself to not being called Cordelia.
- MARILLA:** Very well, then, Anne with an “e,” take off your coat and have some supper.
- (As Anne removes her coat and sets her bag aside, Marilla serves out the stew. Matthew hangs his coat up.)*
- MATTHEW:** Trip to the station’s made me hungry.
- (Matthew and Marilla bow their heads for a moment in silent prayer. Anne doesn’t quite know what to do. Matthew and Marilla begin to eat.)*
- MARILLA:** Did you ask Mrs. Peter Blewett why she’d brought a girl?
- MATTHEW:** Never saw her. She left *(He hesitates to get the pronunciation right.)* Anne with the stationmaster. He said she didn’t bring no boys off the train. Didn’t see how she could be left at the station, no matter where the mistake was.
- MARILLA:** Well, we’ll straighten this out tomorrow. Mrs. Peter’s going to the Barry’s. I’ll talk to her first thing. *(She looks at Anne who is sitting sadly at the table.)* You’re not eating.
- ANNE:** I can’t. I’m in the depths of despair. Can you eat when you’re in the depths of despair?
- MARILLA:** I’ve never been in the depths of despair, so I can’t say.
- ANNE:** Well, did you ever try to imagine you were in the depths of despair?

MARILLA: No, I didn't.

ANNE: Then I don't think you can understand what it's like. It's a very uncomfortable feeling. When you try to eat, a lump comes right up in your throat and you can't swallow anything, not even if it was a chocolate caramel. I had one chocolate caramel two years ago and it was simply delicious. I've often dreamed that I had a lot of chocolate caramels, but I always wake up just when I'm about to eat them. I hope you're not offended because I can't eat. Everything is extremely nice, but I can't.

*(Marilla and Matthew look at each other.)*

MATTHEW: I guess she's tired. Best put her to bed, Marilla.

MARILLA: I suppose. I made up the couch in the back room for the boy, but that won't do for her. *(As she lights a candle)* We'll have to put you in the east gable, I guess. It's plain but it's clean. Bring your bag.

*(Anne picks up her bag. Marilla starts out.)*

MATTHEW: Anne. *(She turns back.)* Sleep well.

ANNE: Thank you, Mr. Cuthbert.

*(Anne and Marilla exit to Anne's room. It is very austere. Marilla holds a candle.)*

MARILLA: I suppose you have a nightgown?

ANNE: Yes, the matron of the asylum made it for me. It's fearfully skimpy, but you can dream just as well in it as in a lovely trailing one with frills round the collar.

MARILLA: Well, undress as quick as you can and go to bed. I'll come back in a few minutes for the candle. I daren't trust you to put it out yourself. You'd likely set the place on fire. Good night. *(Turns to go.)*

ANNE: How can you call it a good night when you know it must be the very worst night I've ever had?

**MARILLA:** That's a good, old bed, nice and firm. And you've a room all to yourself. I expect this is a far better night than most you had back in that orphan asylum. Good night. *(She goes.)*

*(Anne looks around the room. She shivers and tries to hold back her tears, but they burst forth as she throws herself on the bed. After a moment, she gathers her strength and sits up with conviction. She blows the candle out and lies down.)*

#### Scene 4

As the lights come up, a rooster crows. Bright sunlight. Anne dresses as Marilla puts breakfast on the table. Matthew enters from outside, dirty from having already begun work. He grabs a biscuit.

**MARILLA:** Mrs. Peter Blewett'll be at the Barry's by nine. I'll talk to her direct, this time. The child'll have to be sent back.

**MATTHEW:** *(Reluctantly)* Yes, I suppose so.

**MARILLA:** You suppose so! Don't you know it?

**MATTHEW:** Well, now, it's kind of a pity sending her back when she's so set on staying.

**MARILLA:** Matthew Cuthbert, you don't mean to say you think we ought to keep her?

**MATTHEW:** Well, now, no, I suppose not - not exactly. I suppose - we could hardly be expected to keep her.

**MARILLA:** I should say not. What good would she be to us?

**MATTHEW:** We might be some good to her.

**MARILLA:** I believe that child has bewitched you! It's plain as plain that you do want to keep her.

**MATTHEW:** Well, now, she's a real interesting little thing. You should have heard her talk coming from the station.



- MARILLA: I don't want an orphan girl, and if I did, she isn't the style I'd pick. No, she's got to be sent back straight away.
- ANNE: *(Bursts into the room)* Good morning, Miss Cuthbert! Good morning, Mr. Cuthbert! Oh, isn't it wonderful? Don't you feel as if you loved the world on a morning like this? I'm not in the depths of despair, anymore. I've just been imagining that it was me you really wanted after all and that I was to stay here for ever and ever. It was a great comfort while it lasted.
- MARILLA: Sit down and eat your breakfast.
- (Matthew exits.)*
- ANNE: I'm pretty hungry, this morning. The world doesn't seem such a howling wilderness as it did last night. I'm so glad it's sunshiny. But I like rainy mornings real well, too. All sorts of mornings are interesting, don't you think? But it's easier to be cheerful and bear up under affliction on a sunshiny day.
- MARILLA: For pity sakes, hold your tongue! You talk entirely too much for a little girl. *(Anne is stopped short. She begins to eat slowly in silence.)* Can you wash dishes right?
- ANNE: Pretty well. I'm better at looking after children. It's a pity you haven't any here for me to look after.
- MARILLA: I don't want any more children than I've got at present. What's to be done with you I don't know. Matthew's a most ridiculous man.
- ANNE: I think he's lovely. He's so very sympathetic. I felt he was a kindred spirit as soon as I ever saw him.
- MARILLA: You're both strange enough if that's what you mean. When you wash the dishes, take plenty of hot water, and be sure you dry them well. After you finish the dishes, we'll go to the Barry's and settle what's to be done with you.

- ANNE: *(Softly, to herself)* I'm not going to think about going back. I'm going to enjoy my breakfast and these trees and - oh, look, there's one little early wild rose out! Isn't pink the most bewitching color in the entire world? I love it, but I can't wear it. Redheaded people can't wear pink, not even in imagination. Did you ever know of anybody whose hair was red when she was young, but got to be another color when she grew up?
- MARILLA: No, I don't know as I ever did, and I shouldn't think it likely to happen in your case, either.
- ANNE: Well, there's another hope gone. My life is a perfect graveyard of buried hopes. That's a sentence I read in a book once. I say it to comfort myself whenever I'm disappointed in anything. It's so nice and romantic, don't you think?
- MARILLA: Since you're bent on talking, you might as well talk to some purpose. Tell me what you know about yourself. Where were you born and such?
- ANNE: Bolingbroke, Nova Scotia. My father was Walter Shirley, and he was a teacher in the high school. My mother was Bertha Shirley. Aren't Walter and Bertha lovely names?
- MARILLA: A person's name doesn't matter as long as she behaves herself.
- ANNE: *(She talks matter of factly as she eats.)* My mother was a teacher, too, but Mrs. Thomas said they were a pair of babies and poor as church mice. They went to live in a teeny-weeny, little yellow house. I never really saw it, but I've imagined it thousands of times. Honeysuckle over the parlor window, lilacs in the -
- MARILLA: I don't need your imaginings. Stick to the bald facts.
- ANNE: Mrs. Thomas said I was the homeliest baby she ever saw, nothing but eyes. But my mother thought I was perfectly beautiful. I'm glad she was satisfied with me,