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Dramatic Publishing

L.M. Montgomery's

Anne of Green Gables

Dramatized

by

JOSEPH ROBINETTE



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(ANNE OF GREEN GABLES)

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

1. Train Station Platform
2. Green Gables (Kitchen/sitting room)
3. Street in Avonlea
4. Green Gables
5. Sunday School Classroom
6. Green Gables
7. Barry's Parlor
8. Schoolyard/Classroom
9. Green Gables
10. Barry's Parlor

ACT TWO

1. Green Gables
2. Barry's Parlor
3. Street in Avonlea
4. Barry's Parlor
5. Green Gables
6. Barry's Parlor/Queen's Academy Study Room
7. Green Gables
8. Boarding House Parlor at Queen's Academy
9. Street in Charlottetown
10. A Courtyard at Queen's Academy
11. Green Gables
12. Cemetery Road
13. Green Gables

NOTE: All locales in the play may be performed on a unit set – see ground plan for suggested playing areas. Each scene should “dissolve” into the next so that an over-lapping effect is achieved. Except for the Green Gables locale, all areas will be used for multiple settings. Since each scene begins and ends with actors entering and exiting respectively, the use of a curtain between scenes is unnecessary.

ANNE OF GREEN GABLES

A Full-Length Play
For Six-Twelve Men and Twelve-Nineteen Women
and Extras if desired

CHARACTERS

(Major Speaking Roles,* In Order of Appearance)

ANNE SHIRLEY
MATTHEW CUTHBERT
MARILLA CUTHBERT
RACHEL LYNDE
MR. PHILLIPS
PRISSY ANDREWS
DIANA BARRY
MRS. BARRY
MINNIE MAY BARRY
JOSIE PYE
RUBY GILLIS
MOODY MacPHERSON
CHARLIE SLOANE
JANE ANDREWS
GILBERT BLYTHE
MISS SUSAN STACY
AUNT JOSEPHINE BARRY
MRS. ALLAN

*Speaking appearances in two or more scenes.

(Minor Speaking Roles and Extras)

STATIONMASTER
MRS. BLEWETT
REVEREND BENTLEY
MISS ROGERSON
JERRY BUOTE
TILLIE BOULTER
JIMMY GLOVER
BESSIE WRIGHT
MARY JO
REVEREND ALLAN
CARRIE SLOANE
PRESIDENT OF QUEEN'S ACADEMY
MR. SADLER

EXTRAS: SCHOOL CHILDREN, GIRLS AT
SUNDAY SCHOOL, GRADUATES OF QUEEN'S
ACADEMY, MOURNERS AND PALLBEARERS

THE TIME: The early 1900s

THE PLACE: Avonlea
and other locations on Prince Edward Island, Canada

**Doubling Suggestions for a Cast of
Six Men and Twelve Women**

1ST ACTOR

Stationmaster
Mr. Phillips
Jerry Buote
Reverend Allan

1ST ACTRESS

Mrs. Blewett
Tillie Boulter
Miss Susan Stacy
Carrie Sloane

2ND ACTOR

Charlie Sloane
Mr. Saddler

2ND ACTRESS

Prissy Andrews
Aunt Josephine Barry

3RD ACTOR

Reverend Bentley
Jimmy Glover
Pres. of Queen's Academy

3RD ACTRESS

Miss Rogerson
Bessie Wright
Mary Jo
Mrs. Allan

The following roles should not be double cast:

Anne Shirley
Matthew Cuthbert
Marilla Cuthbert
Rachel Lynde
Diana Barry
Mrs. Barry

Minnie May Barry
Josie Pye
Ruby Gillis
Moody MacPherson
Jane Andrews
Gilbert Blythe

ACT ONE

SCENE: *A platform at the Bright River train station.*
ANNE SHIRLEY, a young girl, sets her suitcase down and glances about nervously. She speaks as though rehearsing a presentation.

ANNE. Hello, my name is Anne Shirley, but please call me Cordelia. I think Cordelia is a much better name for me, don't you think? I am truly honored and excited to be going to Green Gables with you, Mr. Cuthbert. I feel I'm the most fortunate girl in the whole universe ... or at least in the whole dominion of Canada. *(She walks to the edge of the platform and continues "rehearsing.")* Hello, my name is Anne Shirley, but please call me Cordelia—

(Her voice trails off, but she continues to mouth the words as the STATIONMASTER and MATTHEW CUTHBERT, in his early 60's, enter. ANNE does not notice them.)

STATIONMASTER *(pointing to ANNE)*. There she is at the end of the platform.

MATTHEW. But it's a boy I've come for. Mrs. Spenser was to bring a boy over from Nova Scotia here to Bright River. Then I was to take him home to Avonlea.

STATIONMASTER. Well, Mrs. Spenser got off the train with that girl and left her in my charge till you got here.

MATTHEW. There must be some mistake.

STATIONMASTER. Maybe she can explain it. She sure is a talker, that one. Now, you'll excuse me, Matthew. That's the last train today, and I'm going home for my supper. *(He exits. MATTHEW walks tentatively toward ANNE who stops reciting to herself when she sees him.)*

ANNE. Oh. I do hope you are Mr. Matthew Cuthbert.

MATTHEW. Well now, I reckon that's me.

ANNE *(brightly, giving her "speech")*. Hello, my name is Anne Shirley, but please call me Cordelia, I think Cordelia is a much better—

MATTHEW. Yes, yes, I heard you saying all that a little earlier. You were talking kinda loud.

ANNE. Oh, yes, we tend to do that where I come from. I was beginning to be afraid you weren't coming for me. If you hadn't, I was going to climb that big cherry tree down the tracks and spend the night in it.

MATTHEW. You're not a boy.

ANNE. But I can climb all the same. And I wouldn't be the least bit afraid. I'd pretend the blossoms in the moonlight were columns in a castle.

MATTHEW. Well now, I guess I can't leave you here. I'll take you home and see what Marilla says. The horse and buggy are over there. I'll carry your bag.

ANNE *(picking up the suitcase)*. Oh, I can manage it. All my worldly goods are in it, but it isn't heavy. Now isn't that beautiful?

MATTHEW. What?

ANNE. That tree over there. What does it make you think of?

MATTHEW. Well now, I dunno.

ANNE. A bride, of course, with a misty veil. I don't ever expect to be a bride myself. I'm so homely nobody would ever want to marry me – except maybe a foreign missionary. Not only am I homely, I'm also thin. I love to imagine I'm nice and plump with dimples in my elbows. Am I talking too much? People are always telling me I do. Would you rather I didn't talk? (*Somewhat unexpectedly, MATTHEW finds himself becoming intrigued by the waif before him.*)

MATTHEW. Well now, I don't mind talkative folks so much since I'm kinda quiet myself. Talk as much as you like.

ANNE. Oh, thank you. I can already tell we're kindred spirits, Mr. Cuthbert. I can hardly wait to see Green Gables. Mrs. Spenser said there's a brook nearby. That makes me almost perfectly happy. But I can never be perfectly happy because of this. (*She holds out one of her braids.*)

MATTHEW. Your hair?

ANNE. What color would you call it?

MATTHEW. Red, ain't it?

ANNE (*gloomily*). Yes, red. I can imagine away my freckles and green eyes and skinniness – but not my red hair. Have you ever imagined what it would be like to be divinely beautiful, Mr. Cuthbert?

MATTHEW. Well now, no I haven't.

ANNE. Will your sister like me even though I'm not divinely beautiful?

MATTHEW. I doubt that'd bother her much, but something else might. Might bother her a whole lot. We'd better get home.

ANNE. Home! What a lovely sound – almost angelic. I don't know that I'll ever get used to it.

MATTHEW. Let's hope you get the chance. Come along now.

ANNE. Oh, yes. Let's not delay. *(They start to leave.)* Mrs. Spenser told me all about Green Gables, and it seems like a dream. I've pinched myself black and blue from the elbows up hoping it wasn't a dream. You see, Mr. Cuthbert, all my life–

(Her voice trails off as they exit. The scene changes to the kitchen/sitting room of Green Gables. There is a knock at the door. MARILLA CUTHBERT, a woman in her mid-50's, enters from another part of the house.)

RACHEL'S VOICE *(offstage)*. Marilla! Marilla!

(MARILLA opens the door to reveal a breathless RACHEL LYNDE, a woman about the same age as MARILLA.)

MARILLA. Evening, Rachel.

RACHEL. Marilla, are you all right?

MARILLA. I had one of my headaches yesterday, but I'm okay now. Why do you ask?

RACHEL. I was at my window shelling peas this afternoon, and I saw Matthew going by with the buggy and the sorrel mare.

MARILLA. Yes?

RACHEL. And I haven't seen him come back yet.

MARILLA. You've been sitting at your window for three hours?

RACHEL. We – had a big pea harvest this year. Anyway, I overheard Matthew tell Peter Morrison over at Blair's store in Carmody yesterday that he meant to sow turnips today.

MARILLA. He finished.

RACHEL. And?

MARILLA. He left.

RACHEL. And?

MARILLA. That's about all there is to it.

RACHEL. I suspect that's *not* all there is to it, Marilla.

But not being the nosy type, I certainly won't pry.

MARILLA (*resigned to reveal the truth*). Oh, I suppose you may as well know. Matthew went to Bright River. We're getting a little boy from an orphan asylum in Nova Scotia. He was to come in on the five-thirty train. They should be along soon. Sit and have some tea, Rachel.

RACHEL. I'll sit, but no tea thank you. I'm much too flabbergasted. Are you in earnest, Marilla?

MARILLA. We've been thinking about it for some time. Matthew's getting up in years and his heart troubles him a good deal. So we sent for an orphan boy – old enough to do some chores right now, but young enough to be trained up proper.

RACHEL. Well, Marilla, I'll tell you plain that I think you're doing a mighty foolish thing – bringing a strange child into your home – not knowing a single thing about him. Why just last week I read in the paper about a man and his wife that took a boy out of the orphanage, and he set fire to the house – *on purpose*. And I heard of another case where an adopted boy sucked all the eggs he gathered. But the worst one – they say that over in New Brunswick an orphan poured

poison down the well and the whole family died in fearful agony. Only it was a girl in that instance.

MARILLA. Well, we're not getting a girl. Matthew's afraid of them, and I'd never dream of bringing one up.

RACHEL. Well, I can't wait to tell – *(Correcting herself.)* –to see how all this comes out. *(Going to the window.)* Look, there's Matthew and the boy pulling up now. Hard to see him in this light, but looks like the first thing you're going to have to do is give him a haircut. I'll just slip out the side door so you and Matthew can be alone with the new boy. And I won't breathe a word about this. I'll let you two break the news. *(She starts to leave.)* Oh, and Marilla – if I were you, I'd keep the lid fastened real tight over the well. *(She exits.)*

ANNE'S VOICE *(offstage)*. The drive here was so pretty! No, that's not the right word. Nor beautiful either. It was wonderful... wonderful!

(She and MATTHEW enter.)

ANNE *(seeing MARILLA)*. Oh... hello. You must be–

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

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

MARILLA. We asked for a boy. Why did you bring her?

MATTHEW. I couldn't leave her at the station, no matter how the mistake came to be.

MARILLA *(glaring at ANNE)*. Well, this is a pretty piece of business.

ANNE *(after a pause)*. You don't want me? You don't want me because I'm not a boy? *(Near tears.)* I might

have expected it. Nobody ever wanted me. I might have known it was too beautiful to last. *(She cries.)*

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

ANNE. Yes, there is. You'd cry, too, if you were an orphan and had come to a place you thought was home but wasn't because you weren't a boy. *(MATTHEW offers her a handkerchief which she blows into, then returns to him. MARILLA finds herself slightly amused, revealing the hint of a smile.)*

MARILLA. Well, don't cry anymore. We're not going to turn you out-of-doors tonight. What's your name?

ANNE *(pulling herself together and "reciting")*. My name is Anne Shirley, but please call me Cordelia. I think Cordelia is a much better—

MARILLA. What's wrong with calling you by your real name?

ANNE. It's so unromantic.

MARILLA. Fiddlesticks. It's a good, plain, sensible name.

ANNE. Very well. If you must call me Anne, please call me Anne spelled with an "e" at the end.

MARILLA. All right — Anne spelled with an "e" — can you tell us how this mistake came to be? Were there no boys at the orphan asylum?

ANNE. Oh, yes, an abundance of boys, but Mrs. Spenser thought you wanted a girl... Oh, Mr. Cuthbert, why didn't you tell me at the station you didn't want me and leave me there?

MATTHEW. Well now, I—

ANNE. If I hadn't seen the White Way of Delight and the Lake of Shining Waters, it wouldn't be quite so hard to leave.

MARILLA. What on earth does she mean?

MATTHEW. It's new names she gave to the apple tree grove and Barry's pond.

MARILLA. Sounds like your imagination works overtime. Come upstairs, and I'll show you where you can sleep tonight. Then we'll have some supper.

ANNE. I won't have any, thank you. I can't eat when I'm in the depths of despair. Can you?

MARILLA. I've never been in the depths of despair, so I can't say.

ANNE. You could imagine what it would be like.

MARILLA. I've got my hands full handling the *real* things in life. I got no time for imagination. Come on.

(She and ANNE exit in the direction of the upstairs. MATTHEW appears somewhat agitated. He takes a pipe and tobacco from a drawer, packs the pipe, then lights it. MARILLA re-enters, calling back upstairs.)

MARILLA. You can unpack your things first, then come back down. If you still don't want any supper, you can at least say good-night. *(To MATTHEW.)* We'll send her back to the orphan asylum tomorrow.

MATTHEW. Well now, I—

MARILLA. Matthew Cuthbert, you never light up that pipe unless something's weighing on your mind. What is it?

MATTHEW. I was just thinking it seems a kind of pity to send her back when she's so set on staying here.

MARILLA. You mean to say you think we ought to keep her? What good would she be to us?

MATTHEW. We might be some good to her.

MARILLA. I believe that child has bewitched you.

MATTHEW. She's a real nice little thing. Real interesting, too. (*A slight chuckle.*) She talked my arm off coming home from the station.

MARILLA. Oh, she's a talker, all right, but that's nothing in her favor. Anyway, you need somebody to help you with the chores.

MATTHEW. I could hire a local boy part-time. The girl could be company for you.

MARILLA. I'm not suffering for company. And I don't aim to keep her. And I wish you'd go outside with that pipe.

MATTHEW. I'll put the mare in the barn.

(He exits. MARILLA paces uncomfortably as ANNE enters.)

ANNE. Oh, Miss Cuthbert, I love the view from the window upstairs. In the moonlight, the trees and flowers are fairly shimmering. They seemed to be calling me, "Anne, Anne, come out to us. We need a playmate." But I don't dare go out, of course, There's no use in loving things if you have to be torn from them, is there?

MARILLA *(after a pause)*. Can you do chores?

ANNE. Oh, yes. I can sweep and clean and wash dishes—

MARILLA. I mean outside chores... Oh, never mind. That Matthew — what's he got me thinking? He's a ridiculous man.

ANNE. I think he's lovely. He didn't mind how much I talked, and he seemed to like it. The moment I saw him, I felt we were kindred spirits.

MARILLA. You're both kinda strange, if that's what you mean by kindred spirits.

(A knock at the door. MARILLA answers, and MRS. BLEWETT, a stern, austere woman, enters.)

MARILLA. Evening, Mrs. Blewett.

MRS. BLEWETT *(nodding)*. Miss Cuthbert. I just ran in to Mrs. Lynde at the foot of the hill, and she told me you and your brother had adopted a little boy. Now, Mr. Blewett and I were thinking of getting us a young girl at that orphanage. Do you think they might have a hard-working girl with clear eyes and a strong back?

MARILLA. Well... This is quite a coincidence, Mrs. Blewett – perhaps a providential coincidence. We may be able to work something out right here. You see, we ordered a boy, but they sent this girl.

MRS. BLEWETT *(eyeing ANNE)*. Not very stout looking, but wiry. That'll do, I guess. If I take you, you'll have to be mighty good – and smart – and respectful. I'll expect you to earn your keep, make no mistake about that. I got a large family. They quarrel a lot, and the baby's awful fractious. You could take care of the whole lot for me. Yes, I *will* take her off your hands, Miss Cuthbert. If you like, I can take her home right now. *(ANNE is ashen. She practically cowers behind MARILLA.)*

MARILLA. Well, that might be a good thing– *(She sees ANNE trembling.)* –for Matthew and me to think about. You see, we haven't absolutely decided we wouldn't keep her. We'll let you know tomorrow. *(ANNE almost collapses in relief.)*

MRS. BLEWETT. Well, I suppose that'll have to do. Good-night. *(She exits.)*

ANNE. Oh, Miss Cuthbert, did you really say that perhaps you'll let me stay at Green Gables?

MARILLA. Just “perhaps” – and no more. Although Mrs. Blewett certainly needs you more than I do.

ANNE. I’d rather go back to the orphanage than live with her. Oh, please, let me stay here. I’ll do anything you ask of me.

MARILLA. Well, you might start by going upstairs and getting dressed for bed. And don’t forget to say your prayers.

ANNE. I don’t know how.

MARILLA. You’ve never been taught to say prayers? You love God, don’t you?

ANNE. Well... He gave me red hair, so I never cared for Him very much.

MARILLA. Young lady! I can see you need some strong religious training, and we’ll start right now with your prayers. Kneel down here with me. (*She and ANNE kneel.*) Repeat after me – “Now I lay me down to sleep–”

ANNE. “Now I lay me down to sleep–” Why must we kneel to pray? Wouldn’t we be closer to heaven standing up? (*A pause.*) I’m sorry, Miss Cuthbert. What comes next?

MARILLA. “I pray the Lord my–” (*Changing her mind, then standing.*) Oh, you’re old enough to pray for yourself. Just thank God for his blessings and ask him humbly for the things you want.

ANNE. Okay. (*Praying.*) Dear Father, I thank thee for the White Way of Delight and the Lake of Shining Waters. And that’s all the blessings I can think of right now.

(*MATTHEW enters. MARILLA motions for him to be quiet.*)