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L. M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* (Simplified Edition by ChatGPT)

## Part 1

Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived at the place where the main road of Avonlea went down into a small hollow and then rose again over a red hill. A brook ran through that hollow. It came from the woods far back on the Cuthbert land. In the woods it was quick and wild, but by the time it reached Mrs. Rachel's house it flowed in a quiet and proper way, as if it knew it was being watched. Mrs. Rachel often sat at her kitchen window and kept a sharp eye on everything that passed along the road. Nothing could move there without her noticing it. If something seemed strange, she would not rest until she knew the reason.

Mrs. Rachel was a busy woman, but she always found time to watch her neighbors. She managed her own house well and also kept track of other people's business. Her quilts were famous, and she helped with church and school. Still, she could sit for hours by the window, knitting and looking out. Since Avonlea was almost surrounded by water, anyone coming in or going out had to pass over that red hill. So everyone came under Mrs. Rachel's notice.

One afternoon in early June she sat there as usual. The sun shone warm through the window. The orchard below the house was full of pink-white blossoms, and bees hummed in the air. She knew that Thomas Lynde was working in the field. She also knew that Matthew Cuthbert was supposed to be sowing turnip seed that day. She had heard him say so the night before in the store at Carmody. Matthew did not often speak about his plans, so when he did, people remembered it.

Yet now, at half past three, Mrs. Rachel saw Matthew driving past her house in a buggy. He wore a white collar and his best suit. The sorrel mare pulled the buggy at a steady pace. This meant he was going somewhere important. Matthew did not dress up for small errands. He did not enjoy visiting people, and he did not go out often. Mrs. Rachel frowned. Where could he be going? Why was he dressed like that?

She tried to guess. If he needed more seed, he would not dress up. If he needed a doctor, he would drive faster. Something unusual must have happened. The thought troubled her. She felt she would not be at peace until she knew.

After tea she walked up the road to Green Gables. The Cuthbert house stood back from the road at the end of a long lane. Trees surrounded it. It was quiet and lonely there. Mrs. Rachel did not like such lonely places. She liked to see people and hear talk.

The yard at Green Gables was very neat. There was not a stick or stone out of place. Mrs. Rachel knocked and stepped into the kitchen when Marilla called her in. The kitchen was bright but very clean, almost too clean. Marilla sat knitting. The table was set for supper, and Mrs. Rachel quickly noticed that three plates were laid out.

“Good evening, Rachel,” said Marilla.

They spoke politely, but Mrs. Rachel soon came to the point. “I saw Matthew driving off this afternoon,” she said. “I wondered if someone was sick.”

Marilla looked at her calmly. “No, we are well. Matthew went to Bright River. We are getting a little boy from an orphan asylum in Nova Scotia. He is coming on the train tonight.”

Mrs. Rachel stared. She could hardly believe her ears. A boy? The Cuthberts were going to adopt a boy? She was silent for several seconds.

“Are you in earnest, Marilla?” she asked at last.

“Yes,” said Marilla. “We have been thinking about it all winter. Matthew is getting older, and it is hard to find help. We decided to ask Mrs. Spencer to bring us a boy about ten or eleven years old.”

Mrs. Rachel felt shocked. She began at once to speak her mind. She warned

Marilla about the risks. She told stories of children from asylums who had caused trouble. She shook her head and said it was a foolish plan.

Marilla listened but did not change her mind. “There are risks in everything,” she said. “And Matthew wished it very much.”

Mrs. Rachel left soon after, eager to tell the news to others. As she walked away she shook her head again. She felt sorry for the unknown child who would come to Green Gables.

Meanwhile, Matthew Cuthbert was driving toward Bright River. The road was pleasant, with fields and trees on either side. The air smelled sweet from the orchards. Matthew liked the quiet drive. He did not like meeting women on the road, for he never knew what to say. He was shy and awkward. His gray hair touched his shoulders, and he had worn a beard since he was young.

When he reached the station, the train had already come and gone. The stationmaster told him that a passenger had been left for him—a little girl.

“A little girl?” said Matthew in surprise. “I came for a boy.”

“Mrs. Spencer brought a girl,” said the stationmaster. “She said you and your sister were adopting her.”

Matthew felt confused. Still, he could not leave the child there. He walked slowly toward the end of the platform where a small figure sat on a pile of shingles.

The girl stood up as he came near. She had red hair in two long braids and wore a plain, tight dress. Her face was thin and freckled, but her eyes were large and bright.

“I suppose you are Mr. Matthew Cuthbert of Green Gables?” she said in a clear voice. “I am very glad to see you.”

She spoke quickly and eagerly. She said she had been afraid he would not come. She had imagined climbing a tree and sleeping there if he did not arrive. Matthew listened in wonder. He took her small hand and decided that he would bring her home first and let Marilla explain the mistake.

“I am sorry I was late,” he said. “Come along.”

As they drove away, the girl talked almost without stopping. She told him about the asylum. She said there was little room for imagination there. She spoke about

dreams and pretty clothes and how glad she was to be going to live at Green Gables.

Matthew did not say much, but he found he liked listening. She asked him many questions about the road and the trees. She gave new names to places. When they drove under the arch of apple blossoms on the Avenue, she fell silent in wonder. She said it was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen.

Later they came to a pond shining in the evening light. She decided to call it the Lake of Shining Waters. Matthew smiled softly. He had never heard anyone speak like this before.

At last they reached the hill from which Green Gables could be seen. The girl looked around and then pointed to the house among the trees.

“That is it, isn’t it?” she asked.

“Yes,” said Matthew.

She clasped her hands and sighed deeply. She spoke of how it felt to have a real home at last. Matthew felt uneasy. He knew she did not yet understand the mistake.

When they reached the house, Marilla came to the door. She looked at the girl in surprise.

“Matthew Cuthbert, who is that? Where is the boy?”

“There wasn’t any boy,” said Matthew. “There was only her.”

The girl’s face changed. She understood at once.

“You don’t want me!” she cried. “You don’t want me because I am not a boy!”

She burst into tears and laid her head on the table. Marilla and Matthew stood helplessly. At last Marilla said they would not turn her out that night. She asked the girl her name.

“Anne Shirley,” the child said, though she wished to be called Cordelia.

Supper was quiet. Anne could hardly eat because she felt such deep sadness. She spoke of despair in her dramatic way. Marilla found her strange and too talkative.

That night Anne was shown to a small, bare room in the east gable. When Marilla said good night, Anne answered sadly that it could not be a good night for her.

Downstairs, Marilla said the mistake must be set right. The girl would have to be sent back. Matthew said little, but he felt sorry for Anne.

Upstairs, in the plain white room, Anne cried herself to sleep, her heart full of longing for the home she had thought was hers.

## Part 2

Morning came with clear sunlight pouring into the east gable room. Anne woke slowly. For one sweet moment she felt a warm joy. Then memory returned. She was at Green Gables, and they did not want her. The joy faded, but the sunlight remained, bright and strong. She sat up in bed and looked around the small, white room. Outside the window a cherry tree was in full bloom. Its white flowers moved softly in the breeze against a blue sky.

Anne slipped out of bed and went to the window. She pushed it open with effort and knelt on the floor, gazing out with shining eyes. The orchard was full of blossom. The garden below was bright with lilac flowers. A green field sloped down to a little brook. Beyond it rose a hill covered with fir and spruce trees. In the far distance she could see a strip of blue sea. The world looked so beautiful that her heart gave a small leap of delight.

“If I can’t stay,” she whispered to herself, “I will at least remember how lovely it is.”

At that moment Marilla entered the room. Anne turned quickly.

“Isn’t it wonderful?” she cried, waving her hand toward the window.

“It’s a big tree,” said Marilla shortly. “You’d better get dressed. Breakfast is waiting.”

Anne dressed quickly and came down. She tried to be cheerful, though she felt a shadow in her heart. At breakfast she spoke again of mornings and how splendid it was that they always came, even after a sad night. Marilla told her to hold her tongue. Anne obeyed at once and fell silent. The sudden quiet made Marilla uneasy.

After breakfast Marilla told her to wash the dishes and then make her bed. Anne

washed the dishes carefully. She wanted to show that she could be useful. When her work was done, Marilla said she might go outside until dinner.

Anne ran to the door, then stopped. Her face changed. She came back and sat down again.

“What is the matter now?” asked Marilla.

“I don’t dare go out,” said Anne in a low voice. “If I love the trees and the brook, and then have to leave, it will hurt too much.”

Marilla did not know what to answer. She felt puzzled by this strange child who spoke so openly of her feelings. After a moment she said firmly, “You may as well go out. There is no use in sitting there.”

Anne rose slowly and stepped into the yard. At first she stood still, as if afraid to move. Then she walked toward the cherry tree. She touched its rough bark and looked up into its branches.

“You are very beautiful,” she said softly. “I am glad I have seen you.”

She wandered through the orchard and down toward the brook. The water ran clear and made a gentle sound over the stones. Anne sat on the bank and watched it.

“You shall be my friend,” she told the brook. “Even if I must go away, I will always remember you.”

The morning passed quickly. Anne forgot her sorrow for a little while. When Marilla called her for dinner, she came back with shining cheeks and bright eyes.

During the meal Marilla studied her closely. Anne spoke less than before. She seemed thoughtful, even sad. After dinner Marilla told her to put on her hat. They were going to drive to White Sands to see Mrs. Spencer and settle the mistake.

Anne’s face grew pale, but she said nothing. She climbed into the buggy beside Marilla. The road seemed different now. The trees and fields no longer filled her with pure joy. She watched them quietly, storing them in her memory.

“You need not look so downcast,” said Marilla at last. “We will see what can be done.”

“I know what will be done,” said Anne calmly. “I will go back.”

There was no bitterness in her voice, only a tired acceptance. Marilla felt a

strange pull at her heart.

When they reached White Sands, they went to Mrs. Spencer's house. Mrs. Spencer came to the door, surprised to see them so soon.

"There has been a mistake," said Marilla firmly. "We asked for a boy."

Mrs. Spencer looked troubled. "I am sorry," she said. "I thought you wanted a girl. The matron said the child would suit you well."

"We cannot keep her," said Marilla. "We need a boy to help on the farm."

Anne stood quietly by the door. She did not speak. Her hands were clasped tightly together.

Mrs. Spencer looked from Marilla to Anne. "She is a good child," she said. "There is no harm in her."

"That may be," replied Marilla. "But she is not what we asked for."

They spoke for some time. At last it was decided that Anne would go back to the asylum. She was to stay one more night at Green Gables. Mrs. Spencer would arrange for her return.

On the drive home Anne was silent. She did not even look at the Lake of Shining Waters. The beauty of the evening seemed far away from her.

At last she said softly, "I am very grateful that you brought me here at all. Even for one day."

Marilla did not answer at once. She felt uncomfortable. The child's quiet words troubled her more than her talk had done.

When they reached Green Gables, Matthew came out to meet them. He looked at Anne's face and then at Marilla's.

"Well?" he asked.

"She must go back," said Marilla.

Matthew said nothing. He turned away and led the horse to the barn.

That evening Anne tried to be brave. She helped with the chores and spoke gently. When it was time for bed, she went upstairs without complaint.

Marilla sat by the kitchen table, thinking. The house felt different. It seemed less quiet than before, though Anne was upstairs.

Matthew came in and sat down.

“Marilla,” he said slowly, “she’s a real nice little thing.”

Marilla frowned. “We cannot keep her just because she is nice.”

“No,” said Matthew. “But maybe she could be some help. And she would be company for you.”

Marilla did not answer. She rose and went to the stairs. For a moment she stood there, listening. She heard no sound from the east gable room.

Upstairs Anne lay awake, staring into the darkness. She had cried earlier, but now her eyes were dry.

“It was too good to last,” she whispered. “Still, I have seen the White Way of Delight. And I have known what it is to hope.”

At last she slept. Downstairs Marilla sat long by the table, her thoughts turning in a new and uncertain way.

### Part 3

The next morning broke clear and still. A soft light lay over the fields, and the air smelled sweet from the blossoms. Anne woke early, as she had the day before. For a few seconds she lay quiet, feeling that strange mix of hope and sorrow. Then she remembered that she was to go back. She did not cry. She lay very still and listened to the birds outside the window. Their songs seemed bright and fearless.

“They do not know what it is to be sent away,” she thought. “They belong here.”

She rose and dressed slowly. When she came down to the kitchen, Marilla was already at work. Matthew sat at the table. He looked at Anne kindly, but he did not speak at once.

Breakfast was quiet. Anne tried to eat, though her throat felt tight. She spoke only once.

“I am very grateful for all your kindness,” she said simply. “I shall never forget it.”

Matthew’s fork stopped in mid-air. Marilla looked at her sharply. The child’s face was pale but calm.

After the meal Marilla began to clear the table. Anne stepped forward at once.

“May I help?” she asked.

“You may wash the dishes,” said Marilla.

Anne worked carefully, more carefully than ever before. She dried each plate with care and set it in its place. She wanted to leave no fault behind her. When she had finished, she stood waiting.

“You may go out if you like,” said Marilla.

Anne hesitated. Then she nodded and went outside. She walked straight to the brook. The water ran clear and bright, as it had the day before. She sat on the bank and folded her hands.

“Good-bye,” she whispered. “You were a lovely friend, even for a short time.”

She stayed there until she heard Matthew calling her. When she returned to the house, she saw that he had hitched the horse to the buggy.

“Are we going now?” she asked quietly.

Marilla stood in the doorway. She looked at Anne’s small figure, at the thin dress, at the red braids shining in the sun. She felt something move in her heart—something warm and troubling.

“Matthew,” she said suddenly, “you may unhitch the horse.”

Matthew looked at her in surprise. “What for?”

“She is not going back today,” said Marilla. Her voice was firm, but her face was pale. “I have been thinking. Perhaps we made a mistake.”

Anne stood very still. She did not move or speak.

“You mean—?” said Matthew slowly.

“I mean,” said Marilla, “that we will keep her. We have decided to adopt a child. We may as well adopt her. She will have to work and mind her manners. I will not have her talking too much nonsense. But she may stay.”

For a moment Anne did not understand. The words seemed too great to be real. Then they reached her heart. Her face flushed deep red, and her eyes filled with light.

“You mean I may stay?” she whispered.

“Yes,” said Marilla. “If you will try to behave yourself.”

Anne gave a cry that was half joy and half sob. She ran forward and caught

Marilla's hand.

"Oh, I will try!" she said. "I will try with all my might. I will be very good. I will not talk too much—unless you want me to. I will work very hard. Oh, thank you—thank you!"

Marilla felt awkward. She was not used to such open feeling. She patted Anne's shoulder.

"There, there," she said. "Run along and wash your face. You look as if you might cry again."

Matthew turned away quickly, but his eyes were bright.

That day a change came over Green Gables. It was not loud or sudden. It was quiet, like the opening of a flower. Anne moved about the house with light steps. She looked at everything as if it were a treasure.

"Now I truly belong," she said to the cherry tree. "I shall grow here as you do."

In the afternoon Marilla took Anne into the spare room and gave her a few plain dresses that had belonged to her long ago. They were not pretty, but they were clean and neat.

"You will have to wear these," said Marilla. "We cannot afford fine clothes."

"I am very glad to have them," said Anne. "They are my own."

That evening, after supper, Anne sat on the doorstep and watched the sunset. The sky was soft gold and rose. A cool wind moved through the trees.

"It feels different," she said softly. "Yesterday I looked at it as a visitor. Today I look at it as one who belongs."

Marilla stood behind her for a moment. She did not speak, but she listened.

As night fell, Anne went up to the east gable room. It no longer seemed bare and cold. It seemed full of promise. She knelt by the bed and clasped her hands.

"I will be good," she whispered. "I will make them glad they kept me."

Downstairs Matthew sat quietly, feeling a deep peace. Marilla folded her knitting and looked around the kitchen. It seemed warmer somehow.

Outside, the brook ran on in the dark, steady and clear. The cherry tree stood white in the moonlight. And in the small east gable room, a lonely child was lonely no more.

## Part 4

The days that followed were full of new sights and new rules for Anne. On her first real morning as a member of Green Gables, she woke with a sudden start and then smiled. She was not in the asylum. She was not visiting. She lived here. The thought felt bright and warm inside her, like sunlight.

She dressed quickly and went downstairs. Marilla was already in the kitchen, making bread. Matthew had gone out to the barn.

“You are up early,” said Marilla.

“I did not want to lose a single minute,” said Anne earnestly. “When you have a home, you must not waste it.”

Marilla looked at her for a long moment. “You may help me with the bread,” she said at last. “But mind you do as I tell you.”

Anne tried very hard to follow every direction exactly. She watched Marilla’s hands and copied her movements. She asked questions—many questions—about flour and yeast and ovens. Marilla told her sharply to work and not chatter. Anne bit her lip and tried to remember.

After breakfast Marilla took her outside.

“You must learn the ways of the farm,” she said. “You are not here to dream all day.”

“No,” said Anne quickly. “I will dream only when my work is done.”

They walked through the yard and down toward the barn. Matthew was there, feeding the animals. When he saw Anne, his face lit with a quiet smile.

“Good morning,” he said shyly.

“Good morning, Mr. Cuthbert,” said Anne. “Isn’t it a splendid day to begin being useful?”

Matthew nodded. He showed her how to scatter grain for the hens. Anne moved among them carefully, laughing when they fluttered around her feet.

“I have never had hens before,” she said. “They look so important.”

Matthew felt that life in the barn seemed less lonely with her voice in it.

Later that morning Marilla sent Anne to the garden to pull weeds. Anne knelt in the warm earth and worked with great care. At first she sang softly to herself. Then she stopped and thought.

“I must not sing too much,” she murmured. “Marilla might not like it.”

She worked steadily, though now and then she lifted her head to look at the sky. The clouds moved slowly above her.

At noon she came inside with dirt on her hands and a proud smile.

“I have finished the row,” she said.

Marilla inspected it. “You have done fairly well,” she said. “But you must be careful to pull out the roots.”

“I will remember,” said Anne seriously. “I want to do everything right.”

In the afternoon Marilla decided that Anne must meet Mrs. Rachel Lynde. “She is our neighbor,” Marilla said. “And she has sharp eyes.”

Anne felt a small flutter in her stomach, but she nodded bravely.

They walked down the lane and across the hollow. Mrs. Rachel was at her window, as always. When she saw them coming, she stepped out to the door.

She looked Anne up and down.

“So this is the child,” she said.

Anne stood very straight. She tried to remember that she must be good.

“How do you do, ma’am?” she said politely.

Mrs. Rachel examined her red hair and thin face.

“She is not much to look at,” she said to Marilla, as if Anne were not there.

The words struck Anne like a blow. Her face flushed deep red. Her eyes filled with sudden fire.

“I am sorry I am not pretty,” she said in a trembling voice. “But I cannot help it.”

Marilla felt a sharp pull of shame. She had not expected such open hurt. Mrs. Rachel went on speaking, still unaware of the storm she had raised.

Anne could bear no more. “I think you are very rude,” she cried suddenly. “It is cruel to speak of a person’s looks when she cannot change them!”

Mrs. Rachel gasped. No child had ever spoken to her like that.

“Anne!” said Marilla sharply.

Anne stood, breathing hard. “I am sorry,” she said at once, though her eyes still shone. “I should not have spoken so. But it hurt very much.”

There was silence. Mrs. Rachel looked from Anne to Marilla.

“Well,” she said slowly, “she has spirit, that is certain.”

Marilla felt both anger and a strange pride. She led Anne home without another word.

When they reached the house, Marilla turned to her.

“You were very wrong to speak like that,” she said sternly.

Anne lowered her head. “Yes,” she said. “I know I was. But it hurt so much.”

Marilla’s voice softened, though she tried to keep it firm. “You must learn to hold your tongue. It is not always wise to speak what you feel.”

“I will try,” said Anne quietly.

That evening Anne sat alone on the step again. The sky was pale and calm. She thought about what had happened.

“I must learn to be patient,” she told herself. “If I am to stay here, I must grow.”

Inside, Marilla watched her through the window. She felt that life had grown more complicated since Anne came—but also more alive.

Matthew came in from the barn and sat down.

“She will do,” he said gently.

Marilla did not answer at once. Then she nodded, very slightly.

“Yes,” she said. “She will do.”

And outside, under the soft evening sky, Anne sat with her hands folded, thinking of all the tomorrows that now belonged to her.

## Part 5

The next morning Anne woke with a strange mix of shame and hope. She remembered her sharp words to Mrs. Rachel and felt her cheeks grow warm. Yet she also remembered that she still belonged at Green Gables. That thought steadied her heart.

At breakfast she was quiet. Marilla watched her closely.

“You must go and apologize to Mrs. Rachel,” Marilla said at last. “It is the right thing to do.”

Anne’s face fell. “Must I?” she asked in a small voice.

“Yes. You spoke out of turn.”

Anne folded her hands in her lap. “Very well,” she said after a moment. “I will go.”

They walked together down the lane. The day was bright and still. Anne noticed the way the light lay on the grass, but she did not speak of it. She was thinking about what she must say.

“You are not to make a speech,” Marilla warned her. “You are to say you are sorry. That is enough.”

Anne nodded. But her eyes shone with nervous energy.

Mrs. Rachel was in her yard. When she saw them, she folded her arms.

“So you have come,” she said.

Anne stepped forward. For a second she could not speak. Then the words poured out.

“Mrs. Rachel, I am very sorry I spoke so rudely yesterday. I was wrong. I let my temper get the better of me. I hope you will forgive me. I shall try to be more patient.”

She paused, then added softly, “It hurt when you spoke of my looks. But that is no excuse.”

Mrs. Rachel looked at her with sharp eyes. Slowly her face softened.

“Well,” she said, “you have made a proper apology. I forgive you. You have spirit, child. You must learn to guide it.”

Anne let out a small breath of relief. Marilla nodded in approval.

On the way home Anne walked lightly.

“It is a good feeling,” she said, “to set a thing right.”

“Yes,” said Marilla. “Remember that.”

That afternoon Anne was allowed to explore the orchard more freely. She wandered among the apple trees, giving each one a name in her mind. She spoke

softly to them, but not too loudly. She was trying to remember Marilla's lessons.

When she reached the brook, she sat on a stone and watched the water.

"I must not be quick to anger," she told herself. "I must be worthy of staying here."

Matthew passed by with a load of hay and saw her sitting there, deep in thought.

"You are quiet today," he said.

"I am thinking," Anne answered.

"About what?"

"About how to be good."

Matthew nodded gravely. "That's worth thinking on."

As summer deepened, Anne began to settle into the life of Green Gables. She rose early, worked in the garden, helped in the kitchen, and fed the hens. She made mistakes, but she tried to learn from them.

One evening she stood in the yard and watched the sunset glow behind the trees. The sky turned gold and pink, then faded into soft blue.

"It feels as if the day is saying good night," she said.

Marilla, standing beside her, glanced at her face.

"You have a way of speaking about simple things," Marilla said.

"They do not seem simple to me," Anne replied. "They seem full of wonder."

Marilla did not answer, but she did not tell her to hold her tongue.

In time Anne met Diana Barry, the girl who lived near the Lake of Shining Waters. The first time they saw each other, Anne's heart leaped.

"Your name is Diana?" she asked.

"Yes," said Diana shyly.

"It is a lovely name," said Anne. "I have always admired it."

Diana smiled. The two girls stood looking at one another, and something bright and new began to grow between them.

When Anne returned home that day, her eyes shone.

"I think I have found a kindred spirit," she told Matthew.

Matthew smiled gently. "That's good."

Marilla watched her from the doorway. She saw how Anne's thin face had

begun to fill out a little, how her eyes were no longer full of fear.

The house no longer felt empty. There was laughter now, and quick footsteps on the stairs. There were questions and sudden cries of joy.

Sometimes Marilla felt tired of it. Sometimes she wished for silence. But when Anne went out of sight for a while, she found herself listening for the sound of her voice.

One quiet evening, as the sun sank low and the fields lay calm and green, Anne stood by the cherry tree in the yard.

“I was afraid to love you at first,” she whispered to the tree. “But now I am not afraid. I belong here.”

And in the soft light of that summer evening, Green Gables seemed to hold her gently, as if it too had decided that she belonged.

## Part 6

As the warm days passed, Anne learned that life at Green Gables had both joy and rule. Marilla believed that children must be trained with care. Each morning Anne rose early, washed, dressed, and came down without being called. She set the table, carried wood, and helped with the baking. She often longed to speak of the colors in the sky or the shapes of the clouds, but she tried to wait until her work was done.

One afternoon Marilla called her into the kitchen. “School will begin soon,” she said. “You must be ready.”

Anne’s eyes grew wide. “School!” she cried. “I have always longed to go to a real school where I might have friends and books and lessons.”

“You will have lessons, that is certain,” said Marilla dryly. “And you must behave yourself.”

The thought of school filled Anne with excitement. She imagined rows of desks, blackboards covered with sums, and girls with shining hair who would speak kindly to her. Yet she also felt a small fear. “What if they do not like me?” she asked Matthew that evening.

Matthew looked thoughtful. "Just be yourself," he said. "That will do."

Before school began, Marilla decided Anne must have proper clothes. The old dresses were too short. One day she took Anne to the store at Carmody. Anne had never been allowed to choose her own things before. She walked among the shelves in wonder.

"May I have a dress with puffed sleeves?" she asked softly.

Marilla shook her head. "No. That is foolish fashion. You shall have plain sleeves."

Anne tried not to show her deep wish. She had always dreamed of puffed sleeves. Still, she nodded obediently. "I will be thankful for what I have," she said.

When the dresses were made, Anne stood before the small mirror in her room. The fabric was dark and simple. She turned this way and that.

"They are not beautiful," she whispered, "but they are mine."

On the first day of school, Anne walked down the lane with her books held tight. The air was cool, and the leaves had begun to show a hint of gold. Diana Barry met her at the bridge.

"I am so glad you are coming," Diana said shyly.

Anne smiled with shining eyes. "It feels as if something important is about to begin," she answered.

The schoolhouse stood by the road, small and white. Inside, rows of desks filled the room. The teacher, Mr. Phillips, stood at the front. He looked at Anne over his glasses.

"Your name?" he asked.

"Anne Shirley, sir," she replied clearly. "Anne spelled with an E."

Some of the children laughed softly. Anne felt her face grow warm but held her head high.

During the morning lessons, Anne listened closely. She loved the sound of new words and the look of numbers written in chalk. Yet she could not help speaking when she had a thought. Once, when Mr. Phillips asked a question about reading, she gave a long answer.

"That will do," said the teacher shortly.

Anne bit her lip and resolved to speak less.

At recess, she stood alone for a moment. Then Diana came to her side.

“Will you walk with me?” Diana asked.

Anne felt a rush of joy. “Yes,” she said. “I would be delighted.”

They walked around the yard and spoke in low voices. Anne told Diana about the cherry tree and the brook. Diana listened with wide eyes.

“You speak as if everything is alive,” Diana said.

“It is alive,” Anne replied. “At least, it feels so to me.”

But not all the children were kind. A tall boy with dark hair watched Anne with cool eyes. His name was Gilbert Blythe. When the class began again, he leaned forward and pulled one of Anne’s braids.

“Carrots!” he whispered.

The word cut deep. Anne sprang to her feet, her eyes flashing. She struck him on the head with her slate.

The room fell silent. Mr. Phillips called her to the front. Her heart beat fast, but she would not cry.

“You must apologize,” said the teacher.

“I will not,” Anne said firmly.

She was sent to stand by the board for the rest of the day. Her face burned with anger and shame. Yet she felt she could not give in. When school ended, she walked home alone.

Marilla saw at once that something was wrong.

“What has happened?” she asked.

Anne told the story in a low voice. When she came to the word Gilbert had used, her hands trembled.

“He called me carrots,” she said. “I could not bear it.”

Marilla listened with a stern face. “You were wrong to strike him,” she said. “No matter what he said.”

Anne looked down. “Yes,” she admitted. “But I cannot forgive him.”

“You must try,” said Marilla.

Anne went upstairs and sat by the window. The leaves outside moved in the

evening light. She felt hurt and proud at the same time.

“I will never speak to him again,” she whispered.

Yet as the days passed, Anne found that school was not only pain. She loved reading and sums. She worked hard and soon stood near the top of her class. Diana remained her closest friend. They made plans and shared secrets by the Lake of Shining Waters.

One evening Anne sat with Matthew in the barn.

“I mean to be the best in school,” she said.

Matthew smiled. “That’s a good aim.”

“Not only to be best,” Anne added thoughtfully, “but to deserve it.”

Matthew looked at her with quiet pride. “You are growing,” he said simply.

And so autumn deepened around Green Gables. The trees turned red and gold. The fields grew still. Anne walked each day between home and school, her heart full of bright hopes and sharp feelings. She stumbled, she rose again, and she tried always to be worthy of the place she now called home.

## Part 7

Autumn settled fully over Avonlea. The air grew cool and clear, and the trees around Green Gables turned from green to gold and red. Anne loved the change. Each morning on the walk to school she stopped to look at the leaves shining in the light.

“It is as if the trees are saying good-bye in a blaze of glory,” she told Diana one day.

Diana smiled. “You always make things sound grand.”

Anne lifted her chin. “They are grand. We just have to see them.”

At school Anne worked harder than ever. She read every book she could find and studied her lessons late into the evening. She wanted to prove that she deserved to stay at Green Gables. Each time she answered a question correctly, a small flame of pride warmed her heart.

Yet Gilbert Blythe still troubled her. He tried more than once to speak to her.

“I am sorry,” he said one afternoon as they walked out of the schoolhouse.

Anne turned her head away. “I shall never forgive you,” she replied.

Gilbert looked hurt but did not argue. He stepped back and let her pass.

Diana sighed. “He only meant to tease,” she whispered.

“He struck at my deepest sorrow,” said Anne firmly. “Some things cannot be forgiven.”

Winter came early that year. Snow fell softly at first, then thick and deep. The world around Green Gables turned white and quiet. Anne pressed her face to the window and watched the flakes drift down.

“It is like the whole world is being tucked in for the night,” she said.

Marilla was knitting by the fire. “You had best put on your mittens if you are going out,” she answered.

Anne loved winter almost as much as summer. She and Diana walked to school through sparkling fields. Their breath made small clouds in the cold air. At recess they played in the snow, though Anne tried to keep her dignity now that she was growing older.

Christmas approached, and Avonlea prepared with simple cheer. Anne felt a deep joy in the small things—the scent of pine, the glow of candlelight, the sound of hymns at church.

On Christmas morning she found a small parcel at her place. Inside was a warm shawl and, to her great surprise, a simple dress with modest puffed sleeves.

She stared at it in wonder. “Oh!” she cried. “Puffed sleeves!”

Matthew shifted in his chair, looking pleased and shy at once. Marilla cleared her throat.

“Matthew had a notion,” she said. “Do not let it turn your head.”

Anne flung her arms around Matthew without thinking. “Thank you!” she whispered. “It is the most beautiful dress in the world.”

That evening, as she stood before the mirror, she touched the sleeves gently.

“I shall try to be worthy of them,” she murmured.

As winter deepened, Anne’s place in school grew stronger. She and Gilbert were often near the top of the class. Though she would not speak to him, she felt

a spark of rivalry each time he answered correctly.

One day the teacher announced that a special class would be formed to prepare students for higher study in town. Anne's heart leaped.

"I will try for it," she told Marilla that night.

"It will mean more study," Marilla said.

"I do not mind," Anne replied. "I want to do something fine."

Marilla looked at her thoughtfully. "Very well," she said. "If you are willing to work."

And Anne did work. She read by lamplight until her eyes grew tired. She practiced sums again and again. She recited poetry to herself as she walked to the brook.

Sometimes she felt discouraged. Sometimes she feared she would fail. But each time she faltered, she remembered the first night at Green Gables and how close she had come to losing it all.

"I must not waste what has been given to me," she would whisper.

Spring returned at last. Snow melted into clear streams. The orchard bloomed once more, and the cherry tree outside Anne's window burst into white glory.

One evening she stood under it, just as she had on that first uncertain morning.

"Last year I was afraid to love you," she said softly. "Now I cannot imagine life without you."

Marilla watched her from the doorway, her face thoughtful.

"You have grown," Marilla said quietly when Anne came inside.

Anne smiled. "Yes," she said. "I think I have."

And in that quiet spring light, Green Gables seemed to breathe with her, holding within its walls the laughter, tears, hopes, and hard-won strength of the red-haired girl who had once feared she did not belong.

## Part 8

The spring that followed was one Anne would remember all her life. The air was full of new life, and her own heart felt just as fresh and eager. She was now

firmly placed in the higher class at school. Each day she walked with purpose, her books held close, her mind busy with lessons.

Gilbert Blythe remained her strongest rival. Though she would not speak to him, she could not ignore him. When he answered well, she felt a quick spark inside her. When she surpassed him, she felt a glow of triumph. Their silent contest pushed them both forward.

Diana often tried to make peace between them.

“He truly is sorry,” Diana said one afternoon as they sat by the Lake of Shining Waters.

Anne shook her head. “It is not easy to forgive a wound to one’s pride,” she replied. “Perhaps someday. But not yet.”

School life brought other joys. There were small concerts and recitations. Anne loved to stand before the class and speak lines of poetry. Her voice rang clear, and her eyes shone. For those moments, she felt lifted above her fears and doubts.

At home she worked just as steadily. Marilla trusted her now with more tasks. Anne churned butter, mended stockings, and helped with preserving fruit. Though she sometimes grew tired, she never complained.

“You are learning to be useful,” Marilla said one evening.

Anne smiled. “I want to be useful. It is not enough to imagine beautiful things. One must also do good ones.”

Matthew listened from his chair and nodded softly.

As summer approached, the orchard bloomed once more. The cherry tree outside Anne’s window stood white and bright, just as on that first morning. Anne often paused beneath it, thinking of the frightened child who had arrived in the buggy.

“How different everything feels,” she whispered.

One day news came that a grand examination would be held in town. The best students would have a chance to win honors. Anne’s heart beat fast when she heard it.

“I must try,” she told Marilla.

“It will be hard,” Marilla said. “There will be many clever students.”

“Then I must work harder,” Anne replied firmly.

And she did. Long evenings were spent bent over books. Matthew would look up from his paper and see the lamplight shining on her red hair as she studied.

“Do not overwork,” he would say gently.

“I shall not,” Anne answered. “I have learned to balance dreams with duty.”

The day of the examination arrived bright and warm. Anne walked to town with steady steps. Though her stomach fluttered, her mind felt clear.

When the results were announced weeks later, Anne stood in the schoolhouse with her hands clasped tight. The teacher called her name first. She had placed at the very top.

For a moment she could not breathe. Then joy flooded her. She thought of Marilla and Matthew, of Green Gables, of the cherry tree.

When she reached home that evening, she burst through the door.

“I did it!” she cried. “I was first!”

Matthew rose quickly. “I knew you would,” he said with quiet pride.

Marilla tried to keep her voice calm. “You have done well,” she said. “We are proud of you.”

Anne felt tears fill her eyes. “I could not have done it without you,” she said.

That night she stood outside in the soft summer dark. The brook ran gently, and the stars shone above.

“I once thought my life was full of sorrow,” she murmured. “But it was only waiting.”

She thought of the long road from the asylum to this place, of the White Way of Delight, of the first painful days, of lessons learned and mistakes made.

Green Gables had changed her. She had grown stronger, steadier, yet she still held her love for beauty and wonder.

As she turned back toward the house, a deep peace filled her. Whatever the future might bring, she knew she had found what she had longed for on that first bright evening—a true home.

And under the quiet sky of Avonlea, Anne Shirley walked back into Green Gables, no longer a lonely child but a young girl with roots deep in the soil of the

place she loved.

## Part 9

Summer passed into early autumn once more, and with it came new decisions. Anne's success in the examination meant that she could continue her studies in town. The thought filled her with both excitement and fear. It meant more work, more days away from Green Gables, and new challenges.

One evening she sat at the kitchen table with her books spread before her.

"Marilla," she said softly, "if I go on with my studies, I will have to leave home each day for town."

Marilla folded her hands. "Yes. It will be a longer road."

Anne looked toward the window where the fields lay golden in the late light. "I shall miss being here during the day."

"You will come back each evening," Marilla said. "Home will still be here."

The word home still carried a deep meaning for Anne. She never forgot the day she had almost been sent away.

As her studies continued, Anne worked harder than ever. Gilbert remained close behind her in every subject. Though she would not speak to him, she began to see that his rivalry was not unkind. It pushed her to think more clearly and strive more deeply.

One afternoon, after class, Gilbert once again tried to speak.

"Anne," he said gently, "I meant no harm long ago."

Anne paused. She looked at him fully for the first time in many months. She saw not a teasing boy but a serious face.

"You hurt me," she said quietly.

"I know," he answered. "And I am sorry."

Anne felt the old anger flicker and then fade. She had grown since that day.

"Very well," she said at last. "Let us be civil."

Gilbert smiled. "Friends?" he asked.

Anne hesitated only a moment. "Friends," she agreed.

When she reached home that evening, she told Diana at once.

“It is a great weight lifted,” Anne said. “I did not know how heavy it had become.”

Diana hugged her. “I am glad.”

As the months passed, Anne began to think more seriously about her future. She wished not only to learn but to teach one day. The idea took root in her mind.

“To teach would mean to give,” she told Matthew one quiet night.

Matthew nodded. “You would be good at it.”

“Do you think so?” she asked eagerly.

“Yes,” he said simply. “You understand what it feels like to long for something better.”

Anne smiled thoughtfully. “Then I shall try.”

Winter came again, gentle and bright. Green Gables felt warm and close against the cold. Anne often sat by the fire in the evenings, reading aloud. Marilla would listen, though she pretended to busy her hands.

One evening Anne closed her book and looked around the kitchen.

“When I first came here,” she said softly, “I was afraid to love anything in case I lost it.”

Marilla looked up.

“Now I know that loving does not make loss worse,” Anne continued. “It makes life richer.”

Marilla’s voice was quiet. “You have learned much.”

Anne nodded. “Yes. And I have much more to learn.”

Spring returned once more to Avonlea. The orchard blossomed, and the brook sang again. Anne stood beneath the cherry tree outside her window and felt the same thrill she had felt on her first morning—but deeper now, steadier.

She was no longer the frightened orphan who feared rejection. She was a young woman with purpose, with friends, with family.

One evening, as the sun set behind the fields and painted the sky in soft gold, Anne stood beside Marilla in the yard.

“Life is not always easy,” Anne said. “But it is beautiful.”

Marilla glanced at her with a rare softness in her eyes. “Yes,” she said. “It is.”

The poplar leaves rustled gently in the warm air. The brook flowed steady and bright. And Anne Shirley, who had once arrived with nothing but a small carpet-bag and a heart full of longing, stood rooted at Green Gables, ready for whatever bend in the road might come next.

## Part 10

The years did not pass without change. Anne grew taller, and the sharp thinness of her childhood softened. Her red hair still shone bright in the sun, but she no longer thought of it as a lifelong sorrow. She had learned that there were greater things than outward looks. There were books to master, minds to shape, and hearts to understand.

Her studies in town grew more serious. She rose before dawn, finished her chores quickly, and set out along the road with firm steps. Sometimes she walked alone. Sometimes Diana joined her. In winter they wrapped their scarves tight and laughed at the cold wind. In spring they paused to watch the first flowers open.

Anne’s love for learning deepened. She read beyond what was required. She wrote long compositions late into the night. When she grew tired, she would lift her eyes to the window and see the outline of the cherry tree in the dark. It steadied her.

Gilbert remained her strongest rival and, now, her true friend. They spoke freely and often argued about lessons. Each pushed the other to do better. What had begun in hurt pride had grown into mutual respect.

One afternoon the news came that the final results for the year were posted. Anne stood among the gathered students as the teacher read the list. Her heart pounded, but her face remained calm.

She had placed first again.

A quiet joy spread through her. She did not cry out this time. She simply closed her eyes for a moment and breathed in the air.

When she reached Green Gables, Matthew was waiting by the gate.

“Well?” he asked.

Anne smiled. “I did well,” she said softly.

Matthew’s eyes shone with pride. “I knew you would.”

Marilla listened carefully as Anne told the full story. Though she spoke calmly, there was a light in her eyes that Marilla could not miss.

“You have worked hard,” Marilla said. “That is the reward.”

Anne nodded. “Hard work and hope,” she added.

Yet life does not move forward without sorrow. As seasons turned, Matthew’s health began to fail. He grew more quiet, more easily tired. Anne noticed the change before anyone spoke of it.

One evening she sat beside him on the step.

“You must rest more,” she said gently.

Matthew smiled faintly. “I will.”

Anne felt a small fear in her heart. The thought of losing him was almost more than she could bear. He had been the first to welcome her, the first to see her not as a mistake but as a child worth keeping.

When illness came suddenly, it struck hard. The house that had once felt so bright grew heavy with silence. Anne moved through the rooms as if in a dream.

And then came the day when Matthew did not rise again.

The sorrow was deep and still. Anne felt as if a part of her own heart had been taken. Marilla stood strong but pale, her grief hidden beneath quiet strength.

In the days that followed, Anne sat often by the brook. She thought of her first drive to Green Gables, of the White Way of Delight, of Matthew’s shy kindness.

“You believed in me,” she whispered into the soft rush of water. “I will not fail.”

The future she had planned—further study away from home—now seemed less certain. Marilla needed her. The farm needed care. Anne’s heart struggled between ambition and duty.

One evening she spoke clearly.

“Marilla, I will stay. I can teach here in Avonlea. I will not leave you alone.”

Marilla looked at her in silence for a long moment. There was pride and sorrow in her eyes.

“You are giving up much,” she said.

“I am choosing,” Anne replied gently. “This is my home.”

And so Anne began to teach at the Avonlea school. The small white building that had once been her place of rivalry and growth became the place where she stood at the front. She saw in her students the same hunger for hope she had once felt.

Each morning she walked the familiar road, not as a student but as a guide. She tried to be firm yet kind. She remembered how sharp words could wound and how praise could lift.

Evenings at Green Gables were quieter now, but not empty. Anne and Marilla sat together by the fire. They spoke less of sorrow and more of steady things—the crops, the children, the turn of the seasons.

One soft summer night, Anne stood once more beneath the cherry tree outside her window. The blossoms glowed pale in the fading light.

She thought of the child who had arrived with nothing but a small bag and a heart full of dreams. She thought of the laughter, the tears, the rivalries, and the triumphs.

The road had bent many times. It had brought her joy and pain alike. But it had led her here.

“Life is not what we imagine at first,” she said softly to the quiet air. “But it can be even better.”

The brook flowed gently in the hollow. The fields lay wide and calm beneath the evening sky. And Anne Shirley, once unwanted and uncertain, stood rooted at Green Gables—no longer a stranger, but a daughter of the place, ready to meet whatever new bend in the road might come.

## Part 11

After Matthew’s passing, Green Gables seemed both the same and entirely changed. The yard was still neat. The barns stood firm against wind and rain. The orchard bloomed each spring as it always had. Yet there was a quiet space in the

house that could not be filled.

Anne felt it most in the evenings. There had once been the soft scrape of Matthew's chair, the quiet sound of his boots by the door. Now the kitchen grew still sooner. The ticking of the clock seemed louder.

Still, Anne did not allow sorrow to take root too deeply. She had learned that grief must be carried, not allowed to crush. She rose each morning with purpose.

Teaching at the Avonlea school gave her new strength. On her first day as teacher, she stood before the class with steady hands. Some of the younger children looked at her with wide eyes. The older boys tried to test her.

"Good morning," she said clearly. "We shall work hard this year, but we shall also learn to enjoy our work."

She remembered how it felt to be small and uncertain. She did not mock mistakes. She corrected firmly but kindly. When a child struggled, she stayed after class to help.

Diana, now older and thoughtful, often visited in the afternoons. They would walk by the Lake of Shining Waters and speak of hopes and plans.

"Do you ever wish you had gone away to study?" Diana asked once.

Anne paused before answering. "Sometimes," she admitted. "But I do not regret staying. Some roads lead far. Others lead deep."

Diana smiled. "You always find a way to make it sound wise."

"I am only learning," Anne replied.

Marilla watched her closely in those months. She saw that Anne had grown into a young woman with calm eyes and a strong will. The quick temper of childhood had softened into patience.

One autumn evening, as the leaves turned once more to gold, Anne stood at the crest of the hill where she had first seen Green Gables in the fading light. The great star had risen in the southwest sky just as it had on that long-ago evening.

She closed her eyes and remembered the little girl in the buggy, full of fear and wonder.

"You were brave," she whispered to her younger self. "You did not know it then."

The wind moved gently through the trees. The farm lay below, steady and strong.

Seasons passed. Children came and went through the schoolhouse. Anne found deep joy in watching them grow. Some were shy and thin as she had been. Some were bold and quick. She treated each with care.

One spring, when the orchard bloomed in white glory once more, she paused beneath the cherry tree outside her window.

“You have watched me grow,” she said softly. “From a frightened child to this.”

The blossoms fell lightly around her, drifting like pale snow.

That night, as she sat with Marilla by the fire, Anne spoke quietly.

“Life has given me more than I once dared hope.”

Marilla nodded. “You have given as much in return.”

Anne smiled, her eyes shining with steady light. “It is a fair exchange.”

And so Green Gables stood through sun and storm, through laughter and loss. The brook still ran in the hollow. The orchard still bloomed. The fields still turned from green to gold and back again.

Anne Shirley, once an unwanted orphan, had grown into the heart of the place. She had found not only shelter but purpose. She had learned that imagination and duty need not stand apart—that dreams could root themselves in honest soil.

As another evening fell over Avonlea, Anne stepped outside and looked down the long road. It curved gently beyond the trees, disappearing from sight.

“There will always be another bend,” she said softly.

And with quiet courage and hope, she turned back toward the warm light of Green Gables, ready to meet whatever lay ahead.

## Part 12

Years moved forward in their steady way, marked not by great noise but by quiet change. Anne continued teaching at the Avonlea school, and with each passing term she grew more sure of herself. The children trusted her. They laughed in her classroom, but they also worked hard. She demanded effort, yet she never

forgot the small fears that could live inside a young heart.

At Green Gables, life settled into a calm rhythm. Marilla's hair grew more gray, and her step slower, but her mind remained sharp. Anne took on more of the work without being asked. She managed the household accounts, oversaw the farm tasks, and kept the orchard in good order. The house felt steady, grounded by shared duty and quiet affection.

On long summer evenings Anne would walk alone to the brook. The water flowed as faithfully as ever, slipping over stones with soft sound. She would sit there and let her thoughts move with the current.

"When I first came here," she would reflect, "everything felt uncertain. I feared I would be sent away. I feared I would not be wanted."

The fear seemed distant now, almost like a story told about someone else. Yet she did not forget it. It had shaped her, taught her to value what she had gained.

One autumn afternoon she stood once more at the edge of the orchard. The trees were heavy with fruit. She remembered how she had once given them grand names and whispered to them as if they could answer.

"I still believe you can hear me," she said with a small smile.

Diana remained her closest friend. Though their lives took on different paths and responsibilities, they continued to share their thoughts. When they met by the Lake of Shining Waters, they no longer spoke only of dreams but of choices and duties.

"Do you ever wish things had been easier?" Diana asked once.

Anne considered the question. "No," she said at last. "If they had been easier, I might not have grown."

In quiet moments, Anne sometimes thought of the road beyond Avonlea. She knew there were places she had never seen, books she had not yet read, and lessons still to learn. But she did not feel trapped. Green Gables was not a cage; it was a root.

One spring evening, as the cherry tree outside her window burst into bloom yet again, Anne opened the sash and let the sweet air drift inside. The sight was as beautiful as it had been on her first morning there. The blossoms seemed endless,

white against the soft blue sky.

“You are still my White Way of Delight,” she murmured.

The words felt warm, familiar.

Later that night she sat beside Marilla in the kitchen. The lamp cast a gentle glow over the table.

“I am glad you chose to keep me,” Anne said quietly.

Marilla looked up from her knitting. “It was not an easy choice,” she admitted. “But it was the right one.”

Anne smiled. “It changed everything.”

“Yes,” Marilla agreed. “For both of us.”

The years had smoothed the sharp edges of their early days. What had begun with surprise and doubt had grown into deep bond. There was no need now for grand speeches. The quiet understanding between them was enough.

On a calm evening at the close of another year, Anne walked to the crest of the hill above Green Gables. The fields lay wide and green below her. The house stood steady among its trees. The brook wound through the hollow, catching the last light of the sun.

The road stretched away, curving gently until it disappeared from view.

She thought of the frightened child who had once sat in a buggy, afraid to love what she might lose. She thought of the long path since then—of school lessons, rivalries turned to friendship, sorrow and growth, and the steady work of becoming.

“Life has had its turns,” she said softly. “But I would not change them.”

The evening star rose in the clear sky, bright and calm. Anne watched it for a long moment.

Then, with a peaceful heart, she turned and walked back down the hill toward Green Gables, toward the light in the window, toward the home that had once been only a hope and had become her own.

Time, which had once seemed slow and heavy to a lonely child, now moved in quiet, steady measure. Each season brought its own work and beauty. Anne found that the pattern of planting and harvest, of snow and blossom, gave shape to her days.

In the schoolhouse she saw the same pattern in her pupils. Shy children grew bold. Quick-tempered boys learned patience. Girls who once whispered grew strong in voice and thought. Anne took special care with those who felt out of place. She knew well how sharp that feeling could be.

“You must not think you are less,” she would tell them gently. “You have your own gift.”

Green Gables remained her center. Though the house was old, it stood firm. The poplar trees still rustled at night. The kitchen still smelled of bread and clean air. Sometimes Anne would pause in the doorway and listen to the quiet hum of the place.

“It is not grand,” she would think, “but it is dear.”

Marilla, growing older, leaned more upon Anne. There were days when her eyes tired easily and her hands moved slowly. Anne never complained of the added work. She rose before dawn, finished her lessons, prepared meals, and saw to the accounts.

One evening, as they sat together, Marilla spoke in a thoughtful tone.

“When you first came, I did not think you would suit us.”

Anne smiled softly. “Nor did I think I would be kept.”

“You have been a comfort,” Marilla continued. “More than I can say.”

Anne reached across the table and touched her hand. “You gave me a home.”

Outside, the wind moved gently through the trees. The orchard was quiet under a pale moon.

In moments of stillness, Anne often returned in memory to that first drive—the arch of blossoms, the glow of sunset, the ache of hope. She had once feared that loving Green Gables would make leaving it unbearable. Instead, loving it had given her strength.

“It is not the fear of loss that shapes us,” she reflected one night by the brook.

“It is the courage to belong.”

Diana’s visits grew less frequent as life called her elsewhere, yet their bond did not fade. When they met, it was as though no time had passed. They spoke of old days and laughed at youthful pride.

“You once vowed never to forgive,” Diana teased.

Anne laughed. “I was very certain then.”

“And now?”

“Now I know certainty can soften.”

Gilbert, too, had taken his own road, but the rivalry that once burned bright had cooled into respect and shared purpose. Though their paths diverged in work, the understanding between them endured.

As years passed, Anne found that she no longer needed to name every tree or whisper to every stone. The wonder had not left her; it had simply deepened. She no longer imagined marble halls. She found richness in the simple light on water, in the scent of earth after rain.

One golden evening in late summer, she stood once more on the hill above Green Gables. The fields stretched wide beneath her. The road curved away in its familiar bend.

She felt no longing to run beyond it, no restless hunger. Instead, she felt rooted and steady.

“I once thought the world would open only if I left,” she said softly. “But the world opened here.”

The sky above shifted from gold to rose. The first star appeared, clear and bright.

Anne drew a deep breath and turned toward home.

The house waited below, windows warm with light. The brook murmured in the hollow. The orchard stood quiet in the fading glow.

And Anne Shirley, who had once arrived as a stranger, walked back along the path she knew so well—not fearing the bend in the road, but welcoming it, for she had learned that every turn carried its own gift.

The evening closed gently around Green Gables, and within its steady walls lived the quiet strength of a life shaped by hope, work, sorrow, and love.