# Anne of Avonlea Study Guide

## Anne of Avonlea by Lucy Maud Montgomery

BOOKRAGS

# Contents

# Plot Summary

Anne Shirley has put off earning her bachelor's degree in order to stay home and help her guardian, Marilla Cuthbert, run their household at Green Gables in the wake of the death of Marilla's brother Matthew. As Anne Shirley prepares to take on the challenges of teaching elementary school, she worries about achieving her ideals of drawing out the best in each of her students. She vows never to whip them despite the opinions of her friends and colleagues. Despite a bumpy start, Anne learns to enjoy the routine of teaching, though one contemptuous student, Anthony Pye, remains a thorn in her side. She takes solace in a new student named Paul Irving, who is a kindred spirit, appreciating life's fanciful imaginings, as Anne does.

At home, Marilla adopts six-year-old twins, Davy and Dora Keith, the children of her third cousin, who had no one else to care for them. Dora is a well-behaved angel, but Davy tests Marilla's patience, frequently getting into trouble , asking sacrilegious questions about God, and taking glee in his naughty behavior. Despite his faults, Davy's charm and exuberance leads both Anne and Marilla to secretly favor him over Dora.

At school, Anne is forced to submit her ideals to reality when Anthony Pye puts a toad in her drawer and she snaps, whipping him. Although Anne is mortified with herself and her failure, Anthony learns to respect her as an authority, proving to Anne that in this instance, she did the right thing despite herself. Meanwhile, Anne and her friends Diana Barry and Gilbert Blythe head up an organization called the Avonlea Village Improvement Society (A.V.I.S.) to enhance and beautify their community. Despite initial reluctance from residents, the town rallies behind them and the society plants flowers and trees, re-shingles the town hall, and keeps advertising off the fences of the roads leading into town. Anne has many adventures pursuing the goals of the A.V.I.S.

Throughout the novel, Anne is described as adventurous and accident prone. She befriends quirky people, discovers natural wonders, and occasionally gets stuck in the roof of the duck shed. Through it all she maintains an impenetrable optimism that no matter how bad things seem, tomorrow is a new day, unmarked as a clean slate. She has high ideals about more than just teaching methods, but life constantly forces her to adjust those ideals in the face of a an imperfect reality. In one successful adventure, Anne meets a new friend, Miss Lavendar Lewis in a secluded cottage near Avonlea. As she did with Paul Irving, Anne immediately recognizes Miss Lavendar as a kindred spirit, full of whimsy and poetry. Anne is taken with the long-ago failed romance of Miss Lavendar and Stephen Irving, Paul's father. By bringing Miss Lavendar and Paul together, Anne believes she acts as an instrument of fate, ultimately leading to the reunion of Lavendar and Stephen.

When the husband of Marilla's good friend Rachel Lynde dies, Marilla invites her to live at Green Gables in order to give Anne the opportunity to go to college. Despite her contentment with teaching, Anne is ready to pursue her greater ambitions. She realizes adulthood is encroaching when Diana accepts the proposal of a young man named Fred Wright, who is not the romantic ideal they once dreamed of together. Despite the

seeming romance of the wedding of Miss Lavendar and Stephen Irving, Anne recognizes adult life might be less glamorous than she hopes, and such romance can come at a high price. When she intuits that her childhood friend Gilbert has strong feelings for her, Anne momentarily sees a possibility outside the idealized fantasies she cherishes. She knows it is time to take a firm step into adulthood.

# Chapters 1 - 3: An Irate Neighbor, Selling in Haste and Repenting at Leisure, Mr. Harrison at Home

## Chapters 1 - 3: An Irate Neighbor, Selling in Haste and Repenting at Leisure, Mr. Harrison at Home Summary

As Anne Shirley sits dreaming about her soon-to-begin job as the Avonlea schoolteacher, she receives an unexpected visit from a new neighbor, Mr. J.A. Harrison. Mr. Harrison is infuriated that Anne's cow, Dolly, has gotten into his oat field again. Mr. Harrison already warned Marilla Cuthbert, Anne's guardian, not to let the cow wander onto his property. At sixteen, Anne is quick-tempered and she rebukes Mr. Harrison for letting his fences fall into disrepair. Mr. Harrison leaves in a huff, and Anne contemplates the impending sale of Dolly along with the Cuthbert farm's other livestock.

Anne describes the incident to Marilla when Marilla returns from visiting an ailing distant relative, whose death would leave behind a set of orphaned twins, Davy and Dora. Marilla's longtime friend and neighbor, Mrs. Rachel Lynde, arrives, armed with the latest town gossip. Mrs. Lynde questions Anne's desire to start an Avonlea Village Improvement Society, believing change is akin to evil. But Anne is stubborn and she is determined to make Avonlea a lovelier community.

Upon returning from a pleasant shopping excursion with her best friend Diana Barry, Anne discovers Dolly once again in Mr. Harrison's field. Determined to get Dolly home before Mr. Harrison sees her, Anne and Diana chase the cow around the field. Muddy and frustrated, Anne sells Dolly on the spot to a passing neighbor, Mr. Shearer. However, when she gets home she discovers Dolly locked in her pen, and realizes she has accidentally sold Mr. Harrison's own cow. Taking the money she received for Dolly and a freshly baked cake, Anne swallows her pride and goes to Mr. Harrison's to apologize and make a peace offering.

Anne fears Mr. Harrison's wrath, but regains her pride and courage when his pet parrot Ginger calls her a "redheaded snippet," a phrase Ginger clearly learned from his master. Mr. Harrison, embarrassed by his own fit of temper with Anne, quickly forgives her and invites her to tea. Though appalled by his housekeeping skills, Anne accepts, and they have a pleasant conversation as they discover each other's quirks. Anne is happy to put the incident behind her and looks forward to getting to know Mr. Harrison better.

# Chapters 1 - 3: An Irate Neighbor, Selling in Haste and Repenting at Leisure, Mr. Harrison at Home Analysis

"Anne of Avonlea" is the second novel in a series by L.M. Montgomery about the orphan, Anne Shirley. This novel picks up a few months after the end of the first installment, "Anne of Green Gables". Montgomery uses Chapter 1 to reacquaint readers with the main characters, while using straightforward exposition to introduce new characters in the world of Avonlea: Mr. Harrison, Davy and Dora Keith, Paul Irving, and Priscilla Grant. Mrs. Lynde is particularly useful in delivering this exposition, given her reputation as town gossip. She visits Green Gables merely to tell Marilla and Anne, and by extension, the reader, about these new Avonlea inhabitants who will play major roles in the novel. In particular, she gives a lot of information about Paul Irving: a new pupil for Anne at the Avonlea school. Paul's father Stephen grew up in Avonlea and is sending Paul from their home in the United States to live with Paul's grandmother. Readers can assume from the amount of detail that Paul and his back story will be important to the plot.

Diana Barry is Anne's first real friend, an immediate "kindred spirit" when Anne arrived in Avonlea four years earlier. But readers will note a gentle divide between them and their worldviews: Anne is prone to flights of fancy and romantic musings, imagining the inner life of everything in the natural world around her. Diana is too grounded and pragmatic to fully appreciate Anne's whimsy. Anne "loved Diana dearly and they had always been good comrades. But she had long ago learned that when she wandered into the realm of fancy, she must go alone" (Page 13). Anne dreams bigger than Diana, and she will not be satisfied with the same kind of life she knows Diana will settle for. Though they may always remain friends, it is safe to assume Anne's destiny may lie outside Avonlea while Diana's does not.

One key to Anne's personality is her ability to empathize with people of diverse personalities and quirks. Anne does not judge others, and tries to find the good in everyone. Montgomery likes to create vivid characters, and Anne's sympathetic openness gives these quirky characters creates humor in their anecdotes. Anne's willingness to listen creates a stand-in for the reader: Anne and the reader together act as an audience for the misadventures of the characters who inhabit Avonlea, and readers note throughout the novel that rather than an overarching plot focused on Anne, much of the narrative focuses on these tangential vignettes.

Readers may note the subtle humor Montgomery employs regarding Mr. Harrison's parrot, Ginger. Ginger mimics Mr. Harrison's disparaging comment about Anne as a "redheaded snippet" - but "ginger" is another way of referring to redheads. The name is also ironic because the parrot is green and gold. Mr. Harrison defends Ginger vehemently, claiming, "That bird has cost me a good deal one way and another...Nothing would induce me to give that bird up...nothing in the world, miss" (Page 23). Given Mr. Harrison's unnecessarily impassioned delivery of this statement, readers can expect to discover more about Ginger's cryptic history later in the novel.

# Chapters 4 - 6: Different Opinions, A Full-Fledged Schoolma'am, All Sorts and Conditions

## Chapters 4 - 6: Different Opinions, A Full-Fledged Schoolma'am, All Sorts and Conditions Summary

Anne and her friends Jane Andrews and Gilbert Blythe nervously anticipate the beginning of the school year, as all three will be brand new teachers at area schools. Jane firmly claims she will use corporal punishment if her students misbehave. Her goals are to run an orderly classroom, teach what the school district devises, and get on the School Inspector's honor roll. Anne has more idealistic plans: she intends to win over her students with affections and bring about the very best in each individual student. She vehemently opposes physically harming her students. Gilbert, who has deep feelings for Anne but also believes corporal punishment may be necessary for particularly ill-behaved students, takes a middle road of using corporal punishment as a last resort. His stance disappoints Anne. Anne visits Mr. Harrison who also urges her to whip her students if they get out of line, but Anne stubbornly refuses to consider it.

Anne anxiously arrives for her first day of teaching, forgetting her well-prepared welcome speech and instead simply trying to get through the day. Everything goes reasonably well, except an incident with new student Anthony Pye, who is not receptive to Anne's technique of disciplining him with reason and kindness. Anne wonders if any her students might rise to greatness one day, particularly Paul Irving, with whom she feels an instant bond. After being admonished by a student's parent for mispronouncing his name, an overwhelmed Anne heads home but feels invigorated when Paul meets her to give her a bouquet and to tell her that he likes her. Gossipy Mrs. Lynde also appears at Green Gables to announce she asked all the students how Anne did, and they all liked her.

For the first project of the Avonlea Improvement Society, Anne and Diana solicit residents for donations to re-roof and paint the town's hall. Despite reluctance and ridicule, the society is determined to accomplish their goals. Anne and Diana have to solicit some of Avonlea's stingiest residents. A pair of old maid sisters (Eliza and Catherine Andrews) argue from opposite ends of the spectrum of pessimism and optimism about whether the world is getting better or worse. Eliza sourly refuses to give to the hall fund, but Catherine sneaks out to give the girls a small contribution. A Mr. Daniel Blair gives them money after they generously and hurriedly help him bake a cake, but some neighbors pretend not even to be home when Anne and Diana approach. The girls manage to get money from a particularly frugal man who is elated over his newborn son, but Mr. Harrison, even though he believes in the society's mission, refuses to give Anne anything at all. While Anne is prone to optimism and a

firm belief in the beauty of the world, her petty and ungenerous neighbors almost turn her into a pessimist.

## Chapters 4 - 6: Different Opinions, A Full-Fledged Schoolma'am, All Sorts and Conditions Analysis

Keen readers of Chapter 4 will recognize that the entire chapter focuses on the topic of corporal punishment. Anne's continuous and absolute declarations that she would never even consider whipping her students foreshadows that Anne will be put to the test in this resolution, and will most likely fail. Modern readers will also note this debate seems outdated, as corporal punishment in schools has long been banned in western world. Jane Andrews clearly represents the prevailing attitude within the context of the novel, in the late nineteenth century, and Anne's mindset subtly sets her apart as more humanitarian and forward-thinking than her contemporaries. Anne's vehemence against corporal punishment reflects her progressive ideas about teaching, and her idealized vision of what a good teacher should be. Anne claims, "There is some good in every person if you can find it. It is a teacher's duty to find and develop it...It's far more important to influence the children aright than it is even to teach them the three R's" (Page 28). Anne has lofty ambitions for herself as a teacher, and her idealistic nature dovetails with her optimism. Anne believes each student is inherently good and wants a teacher who will incite them to academic glory. Jane Andrews, whether readers consider her a realist or a pessimist, fully expects her students to misbehave and require stern discipline. For Anne, even when Anthony Pye resentfully listens to her speech about good behavior, Anne believes he "looks as if he might be a rather nice boy if one ever got behind his sullenness" (Page 34).

Anne's dreamy optimism constantly butts heads with the general population's more pessimistic nature, and this greater philosophical debate is laid out forthrightly in Chapter 6's argument between the Andrews sisters. There is nothing subtle about the dialogue when Catherine claims, "Well, I always like to look on the bright side," Eliza immediately retorts, "There isn't any bright side" (Page 43). Anne, and the novel by extension, makes the argument for optimism. No matter how low Anne feels about a situation, she always bounces back to find the silver lining in any given cloud. Marilla quotes back to Anne the philosophy Anne has lived by since she was a child: "This day's done and there's a new one coming tomorrow, with no mistakes in it yet" (Page 98). Anne will always encounter people like Eliza Andrews in the world, but each one will have a counterpoint like her sister Catherine, who sneaks out to donate to the A.V.I.S. despite Eliza's opinion, and who will thus always renew Anne's faith in humanity.

# Chapters 7 - 9: The Pointing of Duty, Marilla Adopts Twins, A Question of Color

## Chapters 7 - 9: The Pointing of Duty, Marilla Adopts Twins, A Question of Color Summary

Gilbert visits Anne while she works at her own writing, though she is frustrated that the words don't flow from her head to paper as smoothly as she'd like. She also has little time to write given the responsibilities of teaching. Despite all her efforts, Anthony Pye still does not like her, though the rest of her students do. Gilbert announces that after teaching for a few years he intends to become a doctor, to give back to the world what he has gotten. Anne hopes to give beauty back to the world through her writing.

Marilla arrives home from visiting the Keiths and claims that the twins' uncle cannot take them until spring. Their mother would like Marilla to look after them in the interim. Anne is enthusiastic about taking in Davy and Dora, but Marilla can only see all the extra responsibilities taking them in will entail. Anne prevails upon her sense of duty, however, and Marilla concedes.

Mrs. Lynde sees Marilla driving home from Mary Keith's funeral with the twins, reminding her of Matthew Cuthbert's similar drive with the orphaned Anne which she witnessed years before. Even on the drive to Green Gables, Davy exasperates Marilla with his cheerfully naughty behavior. Anne greets the twins warmly, but Davy continues his bad behavior by stealing Dora's dessert when he isn't allowed to have more of his own. Anne tries to talk Davy into being a gentleman, but Davy has no interest. She can only reason with him by holding up Paul Irving as a shining example of good behavior - Davy is jealous of how much Anne admires Paul, but he can't seem to help himself. The next day, he puts a caterpillar down the dress of a girl sitting in front of him at church and challenges Dora to walk along the pigpen fence, which leads inevitably to her falling into a muddy mess. Not even being sent to bed without supper can dampen Davy's enthusiasm for his exploits. Marilla is exhausted by Davy's antics, but Anne has faith that she can reason with Davy and make him see the error of his ways.

Soon after, Anne and Mr. Harrison debate the merits of absolute honesty versus tact. Mr. Harrison claims to believe in telling the absolute truth at all times, but Anne points out he actually only tells the unpleasant part of the truth, leaving out any positives that might be inherent in a situation or person. Anne rejects Mr. Harrison excuse that his bluntness is a habit. Anne wishes Mr. Harrison would try a little harder to be friendly to Mrs. Lynde, whose heart is in the right place even if she is occasionally abrasive.

The Avonlea Improvement Society's project to re-shingle and paint the hall goes ahead under the supervision of members of the Pye family, who buy the paint in town and do

the labor. But the Avonlea natives are appalled to find that due to a miscommunication among the Pyes, the hall has been painted a garish blue instead of the green the A.V.I.S. chose. The Society is embarrassed and devastated, but the mishap produces a surprising effect: instead of mocking the A.V.I.S.'s efforts, the town rallies behind them, blaming the Pyes for the error, and urging the Improvers to continue to work for a better community.

## Chapters 7 - 9: The Pointing of Duty, Marilla Adopts Twins, A Question of Color Analysis

The world of "Anne of Avonlea" is pre-feminism. In Chapter 3, when Anne visits Mr. Harrison, she is quick to take on the work of making tea and straightening his kitchen. In Chapter 6, when Anne and Diana arrive at Mr. Blair's house to solicit for the hall project, they find him ineptly trying to bake a cake ("woman's work" in the novel's world) and they immediately take over the baking. Though the A.V.I.S. is Anne's idea, Gilbert is president, while Anne is only secretary. In Chapter 7 Anne reveals half her battle with Anthony Pye: he has only had male teachers before and he believes "girl teachers are no good" (Page 51). Despite teaching being one of a very few professions open to women at the time, there were still people in late nineteenth century society who believed a woman's place was solely in the home. This societal attitude is underscored by the novel's setting: a small, rural town on an outlying island. Readers can safely assume attitudes in such an isolated location would tend to be conservative, and this may also explain Avonlea residents' attitude toward the A.V.I.S.: "There was some disapproval, of course, and...which the Improvers felt much more keenly...a good deal of ridicule" (Page 41). The town's overriding conservative nature does not favor change, and worries how the younger generation intends to "improve" their home turf.

However there is a strange advantage (or perhaps disadvantage, depending on the perspective) to this small town lifestyle: everyone knows everyone, and has strong opinions about each of their neighbors. When the hall is inadvertently painted the wrong color, the entire village comes together to scapegoat two members of the Pye family, a lineage no one in Avonlea particularly likes. Avonlea is loyal to its own, and the townsfolk believe the Pyes intentionally sabotaged the young people in the society. The small size of the community allows for easy consensus building. This, combined with the unpopularity of the Pye family, swings public sentiment in favor of the Improvement Society. The hall blunder becomes the best thing that could have happened to the Improvers, and gives them easy public support in future projects.

Another aspect of Avonlea's conservative nature lies in its strict adherence to Christian principles, and a sense of duty toward the less fortunate. In Chapter 7, Anne leans on Marilla's Christian values to encourage her to adopt the Keith twins, saying, "If Davy is naughty it's all the more reason why he should have good training, isn't it, Marilla? If we don't take them we don't know who will, nor what kind of influences may surround them..." (Page 55). Though they may not have much at Green Gables, they are willing to share it with those in need.

Anne works within the framework of her society. She does not rebel or rage against the norms of her world, rather she sympathizes with them. She uses her empathy for the feelings of those in her community to create strategies that will entice them to come around to her way of thinking.. Anne influences people using her basic philosophy that one gets more flies with honey than vinegar. It underlies her teaching methods, as well as her interactions with her neighbors. When Mr. Harrison stubbornly holds to his bluntness as his habit, Anne gently points out, "I don't think it's any help that it's your habit. What would you think of a person who went about sticking pins and needles into people saying, 'Excuse me, you mustn't mind it...it's just a habit I've got'" (Page 67). She doesn't antagonize Mr. Harrison harshly, nor rebuke him, rather she uses logic to point out the flaws in his thinking. In this case, she prods him into admitting Mrs. Lynde has good qualities, and that he shouldn't feel the need to point out to Mrs. Lynde's face that she is a "busybody." But her cheerful, low-key strategy for winning people over works for her time and again.

Finally, keen readers will note an instance of foreshadowing in Chapter 8: "Thomas Lynde lay more on the lounge nowadays than he had been used to do, but Mrs. Rachel, who was so sharp noticing anything beyond her own household, had not yet noticed this" (Page 56). The omniscient narrator offers a pointed commentary on Mrs. Lynde's ironic observational skills. Rachel Lynde's husband will most likely become very ill or die before the end of the novel.

# Chapter 10 - 12: Davy in Search of a Sensation, Facts and Fancies, A Jonah Day

## Chapter 10 - 12: Davy in Search of a Sensation, Facts and Fancies, A Jonah Day Summary

Arriving home from school one day, Anne finds Marilla in a panic because Dora is missing. They search everywhere for her with no result. Davy swears he hasn't seen her since lunch, though he seems amused by their efforts to find her. Anne goes to Mr. Harrison's to look for her and finds Dora locked in a tool shed. Dora explains that Davy locked her in. Anne is devastated that Davy blatantly lied to her and Marilla, a much more serious and intentionally malicious crime than his usual mischief. When she rebukes him for his behavior, Davy is horrified that he has upset Anne. He claims he never knew lying was wrong, and only thought the whole incident was a joke. He promises he'll never lie again. Davy later tells Anne that Marilla should also be punished for lying, since she told Davy that something bad would happen to him if he stopped saying his prayers. Davy claims he hasn't prayed in a week and nothing has happened to him. But Anne convinces Davy that the incident with Dora was the terrible thing, and Marilla was right. Anne and Marilla are both amused by Davy's logic, and ruminate on the fact that though Davy is endlessly troublesome, they love him more than well-behaved Dora.

Anne writes a letter to a fellow teacher named Stella, describing how fascinating and hilarious her students are. She tells of the various innocent mistakes they make, and their dearest wishes which range from dolls to "being a widow" and "to be good without having to take any trouble about it" (Page 85). Anne includes some letters her students wrote to her as an assignment, which, again, range from a letter that announces it will be about birds - but only describes cats; a plagiarized love letter a student found in her mother's bureau; and Paul Irving's fancifully descriptive letter of his imaginary friends at the shore, the Rock People, each with their own personality and adventures. Anne is grateful that she never finds teaching monotonous.

Despite her good-natured attitude toward teaching, when Anne goes to school after being up all night with a toothache, she is uncharacteristically harsh with her students. When St. Clair Donnell arrives late and passes a package that Anne assumes is contraband cake, Anne snaps and throws the package in the stove. The stove erupts with fireworks, the true contents of the package, creating chaos in the classroom. Anne's humiliation only worsens her mood. When her most troublesome student, Anthony Pye, puts a mouse in her desk, Anne's temper reaches its breaking point. When he unrepentantly admits his crime, Anne whips him with her blackboard pointer, finally subduing his perpetual smirk.

Anne is mortified with herself, and is fearful she has forever changed her students' perspective of her. She pours her heart out to Marilla, ashamed for stooping to corporal punishment. Marilla soothes her and tells her to keep it in perspective: Anthony deserved the punishment Anne gave him, Anne can't expect everyone to love her, and tomorrow will be a new day for Anne to correct her shortcomings. Anne wakes up the next morning feeling much better, but is wary when she meets Anthony on the road to school. Anthony is nothing but pleasant, carrying her books and smiling at her. Anne realizes that though Anthony may not like her, he now respects her. Despite this accomplishment, Anne is still forced to take her lumps from Jane Andrews and Mr. Harrison for reneging on her pledge.

## Chapter 10 - 12: Davy in Search of a Sensation, Facts and Fancies, A Jonah Day Analysis

In Chapter 10, Anne mentions Fred Wright to Diana when Diana invites her on an outing: "I might...since Fred Wright is away in town," said Anne, with a rather too innocent face. Diana blushed, tossed her head, and walked on. She did not look offended, however." (Page 74) Fred Wright has only had peripheral mention in the novel to this point, as a member of the A.V.I.S., and a friend of Gilbert. This casual conversation foreshadows the growing romance between Diana and Fred. Given the restricted roles of women within the context of the novel, and the fact that couples married much younger in the late nineteenth century than they do today, readers may anticipate this budding youthful love will climax in an engagement.

The incident of Davy locking Dora into Mr. Harrison's shed and lying about it reinforces the strong Christian morals that infuse the novel. It offers a lesson on the harmfulness of lying. It is interesting note the implication of Marilla and Anne's reaction to Davy's apology and claim that he did not know lying was wrong; they recognize they cannot expect him to know right from wrong if no one ever told him. This exchange sends the message that morality is not an inherent trait, but a learned behavior. Marilla seems surprised to realize that they have to teach Davy the basics of right and wrong. Perhaps she relies on Biblical teachings about Original Sin. Because sin is innate in humankind, Marilla assumes an understanding of sin and evil must also be innate. Despite the glee Davy takes in his misbehavior (he knew locking Dora in the shed was wrong but he justified it as necessary to fulfill his joke), Anne and Marilla don't believe Davy is innately bad. They prefer his mischievous and curiosity to Dora's docile pliability, which sends a mixed message about the virtues of Christian living. Though the novel solidly reinforces Christian values, Montgomery sometimes subtly suggests that even Christianity must be approached with a sense of humor or at the very least, without a rigid mindset. Being born with Original Sin but not understand what sin is, and being a morally upstanding person yet being dull because of one's predictability represent two paradoxes of Christianity that Montgomery mildly ponders.

Though Chapter 11 does not add much to the overall plot of the novel, consisting entirely of classroom anecdotes and reproduced children's assignments, Montgomery uses the chapter to showcase her ability to mimic the style of children's speech and

writing. She realistically recreates the grammatical and spelling errors a child would make, as well as using the simple language to create the cadence of a child's story. If unnecessary to the overall arc, the chapter is amusing and smacks of true life - Anne may often fantasize in a whimsical dreamland, but people generally relate to stories that contain some underlying truth.

The title of Chapter 12, "A Jonah Day," refers to the Old Testament story about Jonah, who was swallowed by a whale. On the day she breaks down and whips Anthony Pye, Anne feels a similar level of despair and self-recrimination as the biblical Jonah. The expectation that Anne would renege on her vehement opposition to corporal punishment here comes to fruition. Though no one else blames her - in fact, everyone thinks she did the right thing - Anne holds herself to a higher standard and is therefore filled with self-loathing. She can no longer hold up her shiny ideal to "kill them with kindness." Though Anne awakes the next morning hopeful and optimistic as ever, this represents an early life lesson for Anne about the nature of ideals: great in theory, but extremely difficult in real world scenarios. The incident may not lead Anne to cast aside her ideals, but it does mark a possible first step down a path toward tempering her expectations, and learning to be less hard on herself when she fails. Paradoxically, Anthony now respects her. By acting in the aggressive and violent manner of a man, Anne proves to him that she is "some good after all, even if [she is] a girl" (Page 100). When dealing with characters like Anthony Pye, Anne can only overcome sexism by acting like a man.

# Chapter 13 - 15: A Golden Picnic, A Danger Averted, The Beginning of Vacation

## Chapter 13 - 15: A Golden Picnic, A Danger Averted, The Beginning of Vacation Summary

Anne, whose birthday is in March, invites Diana, Priscilla, and Jane on a picnic on a beautiful late spring Saturday that she is adopting for her birthday. The girls frolic through the woods, discovering lovely nooks they've never noticed, naming the natural features they stumble upon, and dancing like wood nymphs. They wander into the remains of a flower garden, and Diana recognizes it as once belonging to a woman named Hester Gray. She shares a romantic tale with her friends about Hester's history: a local man named Jordan Gray met Hester in Boston, and she agreed to marry him if he promised to take her away from city life. He brought her back to Avonlea and built her a secluded woodland house, while Hester planted a spectacular garden. After only four years of marriage, Hester died of consumption, but was granted her final wish of dying in her garden. Anne is overwhelmed by the sweetness of the story. Though none of the others share Anne's whimsical sentimentality, they all have a beautiful day. Anne brings flowers from Hester's own garden to lay on her grave in the Avonlea churchyard.

Meanwhile, Marilla receives a letter from Davy and Dora's uncle that he will not be able to take them until the fall. Anne and Marilla are both secretly relieved not to lose the twins. Anne wonders if Davy's morality is improving alongside his manners when she finds him eating an entire jar of preserves he was forbidden to touch. As usual, he doesn't seem to understand why what he did was wrong.

The Avonlea Improvement Society, which has had some success since the fiasco of the hall painting, has a meeting to discuss upcoming plans. They are horrified to learn that local resident Judson Parker intends to rent out his fence to a medical advertising company, which will make one of the main roads to town garish and tacky. Anne visits Judson to plead with him to change his mind, but Judson refuses - money outweighs public opinion in his mind. But at the very next Improvers meeting, Anne announces that Judson will not lease his fence after all. All the society members are suspicious of how Anne convinced him to submit to public will, but Anne omits the truth of Judson's change of heart: Earlier that week, Anne overheard Judson accepting a bribe in exchange for his vote in the upcoming election. Being known for such a crime would ruin Judson's marriage prospects, so he promises Anne he will not advertise on his fence if she won't tell anyone what she heard. Anne, who never had any intention of spreading the gossip anyway, accepts his offer.

Anne reflects on an overall satisfying first year of school as she and Paul Irving visit the church graveyard: she puts flowers on Matthew Cuthbert's grave (Matthew, Marilla's

brother, was responsible for Anne's adoption into the Green Gables household), as well as Hester Gray. Paul visits his grandfather's grave and sets out flowers for his mother, dead three years and buried far away in America. Paul anticipates his upcoming birthday with excitement.

Mrs. Allan, the minister's wife, joins Anne in the cemetery and walks home with her. They chat about the success of Anne's first year of teaching, though Anne ruefully admits that she was forced to give up all her ideals about the role of the teacher over the course of the year. Anne still regrets that she punished Anthony Pye in a fit of ill temper rather than as a well-reasoned decision. Mrs. Allan reassures her that while Anne may not have lived up to her ideals, the fact that she aspires to them keeps her on an ever-evolving path in the right direction. Mrs. Allan asks if Anne is still considering college, but Anne cannot be sure of her future given Marilla's poor eyesight and the needs of the twins. She is content to hope it will work out and take comfort in her friends and work.

## Chapter 13 - 15: A Golden Picnic, A Danger Averted, The Beginning of Vacation Analysis

Chapter 13 characterizes Anne's intense affinity for nature, with vivid descriptions of all the features of the woods that the girls encounter. Throughout the novel, Anne has a tendency to anthropomorphize nature, such as when she says, "We'll make friends with wind and sky and sun, and bring home the spring in our hearts" (Page 101). She is prone to literary devices like metaphor, referring to river as a poem, and claiming each girl's soul is a different flower to match her personality (Page 110). Anne stands out from her friends in the way she speaks and relates to nature. She is more attuned to it than they are, but her enthusiasm draws them in and makes them think deeper, lovelier thoughts than they would without her. Their personality differences are further highlighted when Jane asks what they would wish for if they could have one wish granted. Jane, Diana, and Priscilla all desire wealth or looks or notoriety, but Anne wishes "it might be spring all the time and in everyone's heart and all our lives" (Page 105). Her wish is communal rather than egotistical, implying that her heart is more open to inclusiveness than most girls her age. In her selfless optimism, she does not just want or expect herself to be happy; she desires it for everyone.

Anne's response to the story of Hester Gray's garden and early death also surprises her friends. She claims, "And she got just what she wanted, which is something very few people do, I believe. She had four beautiful years before she died...four years of perfect happiness, so I think she was to be envied more than pitied" (Page 108). She recognizes in Hester Gray her own desire to live her ideals. Anne intuits that once a person has achieved her ideal and felt that kind of contentment, there is nowhere left to go and nothing to fear in death. Although she knows it is nearly impossible to achieve such ideals, Anne still struggles with her own imperfections, beating herself up when she doesn't live up to her own expectations. Mrs. Allan reminds her that "We must have ideals and try to live up to them, even if we never quite succeed. Life would be a sorry business without them. With them it's grand and great" (Page 129). This idealism

informs Anne's optimism: each day begins fresh with the potential to be perfect. Reaching for goals is better than settling for mediocrity in Anne's eyes, and informs much of her decision-making process.

Mrs. Allan asks Anne if she thinks she'll get to college as Gilbert is now planning to go. Anne cannot see a "bend in the road" for her foreseeable future, as Marilla and the twins need her at home. The extent to which they discuss college and the fervor Anne feels about going foreshadow that Anne will come to that bend in the road sooner rather than later.

# Chapter 16 - 18: The Substance of Things Hoped For, A Chapter of Accidents, An Adventure of the Tory Road

## Chapter 16 - 18: The Substance of Things Hoped For, A Chapter of Accidents, An Adventure of the Tory Road Summary

Anne excitedly tells Marilla that Priscilla Grant will be bringing her famous novelist aunt, Mrs. Morgan, to dine at Green Gables. Anne is beside herself with glee, much admiring the work of Mrs. Morgan. She plans a simple but elegant menu, invites some friends, and cleans the house from top to bottom. She wishes to emulate the dignity of Mrs. Morgan's heroines, and hopes she will not find herself in one of the clumsy messes she so often gets herself into. She gently bribes Davy with a beach picnic in order to gain his promise to be on his best behavior.

Anne and Diana arise early on the day of Mrs. Morgan's visit to prepare. They arrange floral bouquets, carefully cook, and dress with reference to Mrs. Morgan's heroines. Mr. and Mrs. Allan and Miss Stacy, their former teacher, arrive for dinner, but an hour later the guest of honor has not appeared. Davy inadvertently destroys Anne's pies when he climbs on the pantry table to put something on a shelf. Even though it was an accident, he is sent to his room without dinner. As the time ticks on, Anne must finally relent and feed her guests without Mrs. Morgan, and she is horrified to discover that she, Diana, and Marilla have each added sugar to the peas, rendering them inedible. During the subdued and lackluster meal, a crash on the stairs reveals Davy, perched at the top trying to spy, has accidentally knocked a shell down the steps, smashing a rare platter Anne had mistakenly left there. Anne had borrowed the dish from Diana's Aunt Josephine for a church function, and it is so rare it cannot be easily replaced. Later, Marilla goes to town for the mail, which includes a letter from Priscilla explaining that Mrs. Morgan had sprained her ankle and cannot travel to Avonlea after all. Despite Anne's careful planning, the day is disastrous, but Anne keeps her blessings in perspective and pulls herself out of her initial despair at the outcome.

Diana discovers there are two nearby neighbors who have platters similar to the one that Davy broke. As Anne had an impending visit to Aunt Josephine, she is eager to find a replacement dish, so she and Diana set out to see if they can purchase one. They arrive at the home of the Copp sisters only to find they aren't home. The girls believe the Copps' plate is more similar to Aunt Josephine's than the one belonging to another neighbor named Wesley Keyson. They don't want to seek the other until they are positive the Copps don't have what they are looking for. Anne climbs the roof of a small

duck shed in order to peek into the pantry window for the platter. Overjoyed at seeing it, Anne falls through the shed roof and gets stuck half in and half out. Without an axe, Diana cannot cut Anne out, and Anne refuses to let her go for help as she does not want this particular humiliation to hit the town rumor mill. Even when it begins to rain, Anne cheerfully bides her time with an umbrella, waiting for the Copps to return home and meanwhile glad for the rain in the drought stricken area. She contentedly composes fanciful vignettes in her head to pass the time. Sarah Copp arrives at home and serenely deals with the spectacle of Anne topping her shed roof. She cuts Anne out and is glad to have an excuse to finally tear the unused building down. Anne is so relieved everything worked out so easily she readily agrees to Sarah's slightly high price for the platter.

## Chapter 16 - 18: The Substance of Things Hoped For, A Chapter of Accidents, An Adventure of the Tory Road Analysis

These three chapters encompass a small arc relating to Anne's attempted dinner on behalf of Mrs. Morgan, from her anticipation, through the failed event itself, and dealing with the aftermath of replacing the willowware plate. As soon as Anne begins imagining the perfect meal and accompanying conversation, and says aloud, "I do hope everything will go smoothly. Mrs. Morgan's heroines never get into scrapes or are taken at a disadvantage, and they are always so self-possessed and such good housekeepers" (Page 136), readers can foreshadow that Anne's carefully laid plans will quickly go awry. These keen readers will quickly find proof of their prediction, as the chapter relating the events of the dinner is entitled, "A Chapter of Accidents." Once again Anne's ideals come crashing into reality, as everything about the dinner goes badly, right down to an absent guest of honor.

Though Marilla admonishes her by saying, "It seems to me, Anne, that you are never going to outgrow your fashion of setting your heart so on things and then crashing down into despair because you don't get them" (Page 147). Anne's response offers a surprising insight into her character: Anne prefers living in these emotional extremes to having a mild temper. She'd rather experience the "depths of despair" if it means she gets to continue to fly high on the feelings of hope and anticipation and joy. Running the full emotional spectrum is a richer life to her than always hovering in the middle. Given the Christian undertones to the novel - Anne's constant moralizing to Davy about his behavior, the more overt missions work of the local church that are occasionally mentioned in the text, the discussion of duty - there is something inherently Christian about Anne's emotional life. Anne's mood swings run the gamut from the despair of Jesus' death on Good Friday to the joy of his resurrection on Easter Sunday. The central tenant of Christianity, this rebirth into a new life, is also the central tenant of Anne's daily philosophy: each day is an opportunity to be reborn, to start fresh without mistakes or sin or failure. Anne never stays in the "depths of despair" for long. She always rises to try again to improve or succeed.

Readers will also note the subtle imposition of the author in these chapters. In Chapter 17 Montgomery writes, "There may have been two happier and more excited girls somewhere in Canada or the United States at that moment, but I doubt it" (Page 140) and in Chapter 18 Montgomery refers to an incident from the first novel of the Anne series, writing, "if any of my readers are ignorant and curious, I must refer them to Anne's earlier history" (Page 152). This device suits the anecdotal tone of the novel. Montgomery intends to draw readers more directly into the action, as if the author is speaking directly to them. Yet Montgomery does not use this direct address until nearly halfway through the novel. She may distract some readers who suddenly wonder who Montgomery "is" in this world, if they are supposed to understand her as a character too. It may distance some readers, by bluntly reminding readers who are drawn into the world the novel creates that Anne and her story are just that: a story in a book, being imagined and written by a third party author. Each reader will react differently to this abrupt first person narration, and it is not a given that everyone will respond positive to Montgomery's intention to make readers feel included in Anne's world.

# Chapter 19 - 20: Just a Happy Day, The Way It Often Happens

## Chapter 19 - 20: Just a Happy Day, The Way It Often Happens Summary

Anne visits Paul at his grandmother's home near the shore. Paul is glad to see her, as his grandmother is away and he is lonely. Paul shares some of his fanciful thoughts with Anne about fairies and the nature of the moon. Mrs. Irving's housekeeper, Mary Jo, believes Paul's crazy, but Anne's kindred soul understands him and assures him his imaginative creations will lead him to a life of poetry. Paul shows Anne a picture of his mother that his father sent him as a birthday gift. He worries a little that his father will remarry and try to replace his revered mother. When they return home, Davy refuses to say his prayers, believing there is no point in trying to behave well if Anne is going to love Paul more than she loves Davy. Anne assures him she loves both boys equally but differently, just as Davy loves Anne and Dora in different ways.

As the new school year approaches, Anne spends time with Gilbert, who cherishes a deep but unspoken love for her, determined to be worthy enough to one day marry her, though he recognizes she is not yet ready to broach the subject. Instead, they discuss lighter topics such as the way the Avonlea Village Improvement Society has infiltrated the town, with citizens now proactively working to beautify the community, and the fact that Ruby Gillis, a school friend, will take over the Carmody school from Priscilla in the coming year.

The next day Anne has a long to-do list to complete in solitude as Marilla and Dora travel to Charlottetown with Mrs. Lynde, and Davy goes to help Mr. Harrison with a project. Anne dons old, ill-fitting clothes in order to move feather stuffing into a new mattress. In a fit of vanity she rubs a homemade freckle "remedy" that she found in a magazine on her nose before she gets to work. Having successfully accomplished the mattress re-ticking, a feather-covered Anne answers an unexpected knock on the door: Priscilla has brought two guests without notice. Anne is sure the statuesque beauty is Mrs. Morgan, but learns, to her surprise, the older stout lady with Priscilla is actually the writer. Priscilla apologizes for the short notice but explains that she had a window of opportunity and knew how much Anne wanted to meet Mrs. Morgan. Anne escorts her guests into the parlor, mildly irritated that they look at her strangely just because she was in the middle of a messy project. She begins to panic that she has no food to offer her guests when Diana appears and points out her guests' funny looks are due to Anne's bright red nose. Anne realizes that she accidentally dabbed it with dye rather than the lotion, and rushes to clean herself up. In the meantime, Diana runs home and returns with food and Anne whips together a few side dishes to share with the guests. The girls are enchanted with Mrs. Morgan, who is clever and sympathetic without being superior. Anne realizes the low-key informality of the day was far more enjoyable than if

she had been nervous about serving what she hoped was the best possible meal. Further, she swears off ever trying any "beautifying" products ever again.

## Chapter 19 - 20: Just a Happy Day, The Way It Often Happens Analysis

Readers may note a recurring theme that represents part of the socio-economic fabric of late nineteenth century Prince Edward Island: there is a marked prejudice against the French, as when Paul says, "I've had serious thoughts of asking Young Mary Joe to sit down and eat her tea with me, but I expect Grandma wouldn't approve. She says the French have to be kept in their place." (Page 160-1) Canada was settled by both the British and French, and clearly tensions existed between the two groups. The French are a minority on P.E.I. and are looked down upon by the natives. This strange bit of racism may chafe modern readers, who must take it as with a grain of salt. These negative feelings toward one ethnic group were part of the socio-economic fabric of Montgomery's world, and therefore they are interwoven into Anne's life. Anne herself does not exhibit these racist tendencies, and Montgomery highlights the pureness of Anne's character by demonstrating that her main issue with Young Mary Joe is not her Frenchness, but the fact that she makes Paul feel crazy for having a vivid imagination.

Once again Anne's ideals shape her worldview. Though she notes her longtime friend Gilbert has grown into an appealing young man, "he didn't look at all like her ideal man. She and Diana had long ago decided what kind of a man they admired and their tastes seemed exactly similar" (Page 167). Anne's ideals are tied to her youth. She has not yet had enough life experience to see beyond her stubborn adherence to an arbitrary perfection. Mrs. Allan starts to point out to Anne in Chapter 15 that there might be more to life than friendship, but realizes that in Anne "there was still far more of the child than the woman" (Page 131). Anne chooses to live at the ends of the emotional spectrum, a fairly immature decision, which manifests in seeing the world in terms of black and white. Gilbert is not the ideal Anne envisions in her mind, so to her he will never be a suitable partner. Gilbert has an ideal mate too, and it is Anne and Anne alone, but he is smart enough to recognize that Anne is not ready to hear it. Both of them have absolute opinions about the other: Anne resolutely believes Gilbert will only ever be a friend, and Gilbert firmly believes he will marry Anne. Conflict will certainly arise when they inevitably confront their feelings head on.

Anne's ideals butt heads with reality when the long hoped for tea with Mrs. Morgan finally manifests as a casual, thrown together affair. At the end of the day, Anne is surprised to realize this meeting with Mrs. Morgan, though not the gloriously formal fantasy Anne had imagined, was even better than she could have hoped for. Without time to get nervous beforehand, she was able to be herself and really get to know Mrs. Morgan. When Anne whipped Anthony Pye, she could not see the consequences positively. Even though Anthony respected Anne more after his punishment and his overall behavior in school improved, Anne could only see her own failure to live up to her ideals and feel shame. In her meeting with Mrs. Morgan, Anne finally sees how the impossibility of living out an ideal can result in a valuable and lovely experience.

Anne's obsession with ideals gives her an unusual habit of conflating physicality with virtues like morality, wit, and success. For example, she tells Davy, "You are a handsome boy, Davy...but you must live up to it and be just as nice and gentlemanly as you look to be" (Page 173). Good looks equate to good behavior in her mind. Similarly, when she sees one of Priscilla's unexpected guests, Mrs. Pendexter, she automatically assumes she is Mrs. Morgan, a clever and poetical writer Anne admires, because she is tall, elegant and beautiful. If she has some virtues, Anne assumes she must have them all. About Mrs. Morgan, who is stout and gray-haired, Anne feels, "Mrs. Morgan's appearance might be somewhat disappointing, as even her loyal worshipers had been forced to admit to each other; but she proved to be a delightful conversationalist" (Page 178). Anne seems surprised that a person could be clever but frumpy. Her ideals are always absolute, so a person who has any good qualities must somehow have them all. As with the tea itself, Mrs. Morgan represents a message from the universe itself that Anne needs to reevaluate her expectations and standards.

# Chapter 21 - 23: Sweet Miss Lavendar, Odds and Ends, Miss Lavendar's Romance

## Chapter 21 - 23: Sweet Miss Lavendar, Odds and Ends, Miss Lavendar's Romance Summary

School starts again with Davy and Dora as students, and Davy adjusts to sitting still better than everyone expected. Anne and Diana take a wrong turn while traversing a supposed shortcut to a friend's house for tea, instead stumbling into a lovely secluded cottage called Echo Lodge owned by Miss Lavendar Lewis. Diana rouses Anne's curiosity about Miss Lavendar when she mentions Lavendar was once engaged to Paul Irving's father, Stephen, before they quarreled and Stephen moved to Boston. Miss Lavendar is now considered an "old maid," though she has a youthful appearance and attitude. Upon meeting Anne and Diana for the first time, Miss Lavendar immediately invites them to tea, which she has already prepared on the off-chance she would have unexpected visitors. Miss Lavendar calls upon her housekeeping girl to assist with serving the meal: Miss Lavendar calls the girl Charlotta the Fourth because she is the fourth sister of the same family that has boarded with Miss Lavendar. Charlotta was the eldest sister. The girl's name is actually Leonora, but Miss Lavendar could not be bothered to remember any names after her first assistant.. The girls finds Miss Lavendar eccentric but kind and interesting. She and Anne immediately bond over their propensity for the poetic and fanciful. Miss Lavendar and Charlotta the Fourth are delighted to have company in the isolated house. Miss Lavendar is surprised to learn that Stephen Irving has a son who attends the Avonlea School, and Anne's inadvertent mentioning of the Irvings has a palpable effect on Miss Lavendar, visibly deflating her. Overall, Anne and Diana are enchanted with Echo Lodge and its inhabitants, and promise to visit again soon.

Returning to Green Gables for supper, Anne and Marilla discuss Miss Lavendar, about whom Marilla knows little beyond her kind but peculiar reputation. Marilla doesn't know what happened between Miss Lavendar and Stephen Irving to end their engagement, but assumes it must have been something big. Anne wonders if it might have been something small, as "the little things in life often make more trouble than the big things" (Page 195). They discuss the failing health of Mrs. Lynde's husband Thomas, who does not seem long for the world despite Mrs. Lynde bossily cajoling him to exert his will to get better. Marilla receives a letter from a friend of Davy and Dora's uncle, explaining that the uncle has died and left a small trust of money to the children for their raising. Marilla is relieved for the financial help, and Anne is relieved that the twins won't have to leave Green Gables.

Having established a firm friendship with Miss Lavendar, Anne returns to Echo Lodge one snowy winter evening to spend the night with her. Miss Lavendar and Anne laugh and act like little girls until Miss Lavendar reveals her tortured history with Stephen Irving: they knew each other from childhood and long intended to marry. During their engagement, they had a small quarrel and when Stephen tried to make amends, Miss Lavendar sent him away again. He never returned, moving to Boston instead. Pride ruined the relationship on both sides. Miss Lavendar has nursed a broken-heart for twenty-five years, but finds it less painful than a romantic novel reader might believe. Miss Lavendar asks Anne to bring Paul to see her, as she wants to see how much he resembles his father. Though it's hard for her at first, Miss Lavendar and Paul become fast friends.

## Chapter 21 - 23: Sweet Miss Lavendar, Odds and Ends, Miss Lavendar's Romance Analysis

There are many examples of Anne's lyrical humanizing of nature in these chapters: for example, Anne claims, "It's as if the year were kneeling to pray in a vast cathedral full of mellow stained light, isn't it?" (Page 182) and refers to "patriarchal old firs" (Page 183). The detailed focus on nature throughout the text, frequently including tree and flora, may seem dated but it evokes vividly specific pictures of the environment of Prince Edward Island. The emphasis on nature reiterates how important and inspirational the outer world is to Anne, and by extension, Montgomery.

Readers will also note another instance of discrimination against the French, when Marilla admonishes Davy with the threat, "if I ever catch you at such a trick again you'll be made to wait for your meals till everyone else is done, like the French." (Page 194) Marilla is held up as a model of virtuous Christian living, and the fact that she is susceptible to such uncharitable harshness against an entire race of people demonstrates how pervasive and entrenched racism was at the time Montgomery wrote the novel. No character ever speaks up that such an attitude is wrong, suggesting that no one at the time thought it was.

The introduction of Miss Lavendar as a major character with only ten chapters left in the novel is an unusual structural choice and reinforces the anecdotal nature of the story, rather than a plot circumnavigating a central arc or goal. Within these three chapters Miss Lavendar's relationship with Paul Irving's father is discussed three times: it's Diana's first reference point to tell Anne about Miss Lavendar when they come upon Echo Lodge, Marilla and Anne discuss the mysterious circumstances of the broken engagement, and finally Miss Lavendar tells Anne the entire story herself. Given the repeated prominence of this information, as well as Anne's close relationship with Paul, a link to the still distant Stephen, readers can infer a new resolution to the failed love story will arise before the end of the novel.

Miss Lavendar gives Anne an understated warning against her idealism when she says, "Dreams and make-believes are all very well in the daytime and the sunshine, but when dark and storm come they fail to satisfy. One wants real things then. But you don't know

this... seventeen never knows it. At seventeen dreams do satisfy because you think the realities are waiting for you further on" (Page 200). At 45, Miss Lavendar understands how unreliable idealism is, but knows that Anne's youth and inexperience could not possibly absorb such a lesson. Only a lifetime of having one's ideals battle against reality will teach Anne the proper place for each. Anne has had glimpses of her ideals failing her, with both positive and negative results, but she has yet to shed her eternal optimism, continuing to believe her ideals are within reach. Miss Lavendar's lifetime of experience cannot teach her otherwise.

# Chapter 24 - 25: A Prophet in His Own Country, An Avonlea Scandal

## Chapter 24 - 25: A Prophet in His Own Country, An Avonlea Scandal Summary

Gilbert and Anne write an anonymous set of "Avonlea Notes" for a Charlottetown newspaper called "Daily Enterprise". Nobody suspects they are the pranksters behind the notes, as they include a snide comment about Gilbert himself. One note gently mocks a local character named Uncle Abe, renowned for making weather predictions that are always exactly the opposite of what actually happens. The note claims Uncle Abe has predicted a terrible storm for the evening of May 23 that will affect the entire island. Uncle Abe is offended by the note, for though he did predict a bad storm, he never assigned a date, and believes himself mocked. The spring weather is lovely, inspiring Anne's poetic enthusiasm. But on the afternoon of May 23, the sky very suddenly turns black and Anne dismisses her students immediately. The storm is disastrous, destroying crops and property, and leaving drifts of knee-deep hail. Mr. Harrison's parrot Ginger is killed when his house is struck by lightning. Uncle Abe triumphantly takes credit for his prediction, after years of being a town joke, but Anne and Gilbert wonder at the coincidence.

Another of Anne and Gilbert's comedic "notes" in the newspaper predicts the impending marriage of Mr. Harrison to a spinster named Isabella Andrews, though Anne knows he only goes to her house to play checkers with Isabella's brother Harmon. Right after the storm Anne meets a woman looking for Mr. Harrison, and Anne is startled to learn that she is Mr. Harrison's wife. A friend had forwarded Mrs. Harrison the Charlottetown newspaper with the note about Mr. Harrison's upcoming nuptials and she has come to ascertain if it is true. Mrs. Harrison and Mrs. Lynde become fast friends, bonding over their disdain for Mr. Harrison's inept housekeeping. Mr. Harrison, secretly glad to have his wife back, tells Anne their history: he only married Emily Scott at the behest of his dying sister, who knew he would need someone to keep house for him when she was gone. Emily accepted his proposal, and upon moving in, immediately started cleaning and criticizing Mr. Harrison's grammar and habits. She particularly didn't like Ginger, the parrot, whom Mr. Harrison received from his dead sailor brother. Ginger had the sailor's habits of bad language. When Ginger embarrassed Mrs. Harrison by swearing in front of two ministers and their wives, Mrs. Harrison left Mr. Harrison, giving him an ultimatum to lose the parrot or lose her. Mr. Harrison initially felt bad about Ginger's behavior but the ultimatum led him to stubbornly retrench into his own righteousness. Tired of the town gossip, he moved to Avonlea, where no one ever asked him if he was married. Now, he believes that with Ginger gone, both he and his wife will learn to compromise a little better. Anne immediately likes Mrs. Harrison, who admits she is grateful to the "observer" of the "Avonlea Notes," without whom she and her husband might not have been reunited.

# Chapter 24 - 25: A Prophet in His Own Country, An Avonlea Scandal Analysis

These two chapters function as an aside, a small vignette away from the building arc of Miss Lavendar's love life. In a roundabout way, the storm resolves a minor subplot that has threaded an offhand way through the novel. One Avonlea resident, Levi Boulter has an ugly, unused house on his property, which the A.V.I.S. has begged him to tear down since its inception, but Levi has always refused to remove the eyesore. The destructive storm destroys a great deal of the A.V.I.S.'s handiwork, including dozens of recently planted trees, but lighting also strikes the ugly Boulter house, burning it to the ground. Ever the optimist, Anne finds the silver lining in all the merciless devastation of the storm.

The introduction of Mrs. Emily Harrison is rather unexpected, but keen readers will remember Mr. Harrison's fervent attachment to Ginger in Chapter 3, avowing that nothing could part him from his parrot. The payoff for that cryptic declaration arrives with Mrs. Harrison. Ginger's bad manners drove a wedge between Mr. Harrison and his wife that led to their separation and his arrival in Avonlea. A second silver lining from "Uncle Abe's" storm can be found in Ginger's unfortunate death. In Ginger's absence, the Harrison's marriage has a better chance to flourish.

Mrs. Harrison's arrival also gives readers further insights into attitudes toward women at this time. As Davy contemplates rumors about why the Harrisons separated in the first place, he declares, "I wouldn't leave my wife for anything like that. I'd just put my foot down and say, 'Mrs. Davy, you've just got to do what'll please me, because I'm a man.' That'd settle her pretty quick I guess." (Page 222) At the age of seven, Davy's views on women are firmly entrenched. Like Anne, he has his own version of what an idealized relationship between a man and a woman should be, though his vision is quite different from hers. Mr. Harrison only marries Emily because he needs a woman to keep house for him after his sister dies - clearly housework is "woman's" work, and even Mr. Harrison's dying sister agrees, urging him into a marriage. Finally, Mr. Harrison says Emily had dinner waiting for him when he returned home on the night of her arrival in Avonlea: "She told me to eat it first and then we'd talk...by which I concluded that Emily had learned some lessons about getting along with a man" (Page 224). This statement equates to the modern cliché claiming the way to get to a man is through his stomach. In the past, Mrs. Harrison was willing to leave her husband for neither living up to her ideals nor being willing to compromise. This makes her akin to Anne, who always stubbornly adheres to her ideals. It also sets her apart in light of traditional feminine values: by walking away from her marriage Mrs. Harrison demonstrates she does not need a man to support her if he is unwilling to compromise with her. Yet now Mrs. Harrison returns to Mr. Harrison, who does not have to apologize for his past behavior. Mrs. Harrison reinforces all the stereotypes of what a woman should be and do for her husband, and what her role in society is. She may also be an example for Anne of the wide gap between ideals (particularly in a partner) and the reality life offers.

# Chapter 26 - 27: Around the Bend, An Afternoon at the Stone House

## Chapter 26 - 27: Around the Bend, An Afternoon at the Stone House Summary

After Mr. Lynde finally succumbs to his illness and dies, Marilla starts thinking about Anne's future. Knowing that Gilbert is already set to go away to college in the fall, Marilla does not want Anne to sacrifice her dreams of education and formulates a plan: she intends to ask Mrs. Lynde to move into Green Gables so that she does not have to leave Avonlea. With Mrs. Lynde's help raising the twins and paying household expenses, Anne would be free to follow her ambitions. Anne wonders if that living arrangement might drive Marilla mad, but Marilla assures her she would rather have Mrs. Lynde at Green Gables than lose her for good. Shocked, Anne digs out her old dreams. Though she has come to love teaching, she knows she must take the opportunity to attend college, as it may not come again. Diana is saddened that both Anne and Gilbert, as well as the Reverend and Mrs. Allan, will all be leaving Avonlea, wondering what will become of the Improvement Society without its leaders. She fears the new friends Anne makes at Redmond will replace her, but Anne promises no one can ever replace Diana, her first and most faithful friend.

Anne takes Paul to Echo Lodge to visit Miss Lavendar again. His sudden growth spurt has him looking more and more like his father, and Miss Lavendar is noticeably wistful around him. Though she understands Paul's whimsy and poetic inner life and responds kindly and sympathetically to his musings, Anne finds Miss Lavendar's mood darker than usual. Miss Lavendar is distraught at the prospect of losing Anne's company, and finds herself sick of the small routine her life moves through. Charlotta confides in Anne that she is worried about Miss Lavendar, finding her listless and disinterested ever since Anne's first visit with Paul. Anne promises to visit for a full week during the summer to liven things up. Paul tells Miss Lavendar he believes she would make as good and sympathetic a mother as his own.

## Chapter 26 - 27: Around the Bend, An Afternoon at the Stone House Analysis

Keen readers will note the chapter title, "Around the Bend," refers back to Chapter 15, when Mrs. Allan questions Anne about going to college, and Anne responds, "Perhaps college may be around the bend in the road, but I haven't got to the bend yet." (Page 130) The death of Mr. Lynde catalyzes an unseen bend in Anne's road, providing Marilla with a new support system in Mrs. Lynde for the house and the twins, and giving Anne a chance to follow her dreams two years after the death of Matthew curbed them. Though Anne has not actively sought her ambition, this chapter represents the climax of Anne's

journey in the novel. Mr. Lynde's death sets into motion a shift that will change Anne's life from the course she has tread for two years.

Diana directly addresses Anne's relationship with Gilbert for the first time, asking if Anne has feelings for him. Anne falls back on her girlish fantasies, claiming that her ideals on what constitutes a perfect man won't ever change. Anne's attitude is nothing more than stubborn, given what she has seen of Mrs. Harrison's adherence to an ideal, as well as Miss Lavendar's obstinate pride that pushed Stephen Irving away from her. Anne would rather die an old maid than accept anything less than her version of perfection. Given Anne's complete lack of experience with romance, coupled with what readers know of her idealism, her rigid mindset is not surprising. Yet here the omniscient narrator gives readers a small insight into another bend that might arise in Anne's road. When Anne firmly declares Gilbert will only ever be a friend, Montgomery writes, "said Anne calmly and decidedly; she also thought she was speaking sincerely." (Page 235) The narrator knows Anne's heart better than Anne knows it herself, and implies that while Anne "thought" she was speaking sincerely, she may not yet know the full extent of her feelings for Gilbert.

Like Anne often does, Miss Lavendar is cycling through a despair that will most likely end in a rebirth: there is little chance that she and Stephen Irving will not be reunited, fulfilling Anne's fantasies of star-crossed lovers finally finding their "happily ever after." Yet the subtext of Miss Lavendar's despair merely reinforces the traditional values of late nineteenth century society: Miss Lavendar is not a complete woman without a husband and child. Short of fulfilling her expected role as a woman, Miss Lavendar cannot be happy, and her growing despair demonstrates that. In the socio-economic world of the novel, a woman cannot remain independent and not be considered "eccentric."

# Chapter 28 - 30: The Prince Comes Back to the Enchanted Palace, Poetry and Prose, A Wedding at the Stone House

## Chapter 28 - 30: The Prince Comes Back to the Enchanted Palace, Poetry and Prose, A Wedding at the Stone House Summary

Anne has mixed emotions as the last day of school comes and goes, and she reflects on how much more she has learned from her students than she has taught. Her students and many parents are sorry to lose her, even though Jane Andrews, a very competent teacher, will take over the school in the fall. Some neighbors think it is arrogant of Anne to seek higher education rather than simply getting married.

Anne spends two weeks with Miss Lavendar to cheer her up. Anne pays a visit to Paul Irving's house and discovers Stephen Irving has arrived unexpectedly, elating Paul. Stephen mentions that Paul had written to him about visiting Miss Lavendar, and he requests that Anne ask Miss Lavendar if he may visit her as well. Anne sets off to the task immediately, and Miss Lavendar nonchalantly gives permission for her "old friend" to come to Echo Lodge. Before the same night ends, Stephen Irving arrives at Echo Lodge and proposes, while Anne and Charlotta hover nearby wondering at the romance of the prince finally coming to the enchanted cottage to claim his princess. Paul could not be happier with his father's choice for a second mother, and Charlotta is thrilled that she will be able to continue to live with the family in Boston.

Anne spends the next month helping Miss Lavendar prepare for her wedding, as well as making plans for her imminent departure for Redmond College. Anne is swept up in the Echo Lodge romance, though Marilla tries to reframe the situation in practical terms for her. Marilla realizes she can never change Anne's starry-eyed idealism, nor would she truly want to. Anne is further stunned when Diana becomes engaged to a local young man named Fred Wright. Though happy for her friend, Anne cannot help but feel a shift and sees a chasm between herself and Diana, who is becoming an adult in ways Anne is not ready for.

As Anne's departure approaches, she and Diana help with the final preparations for the wedding at Echo Lodge, a small affair attended only by family and a few close friends. Charlotta frets that the weather will be stormy or a disaster will strike, but though cloudy, the wedding day passes beautifully and joyfully for all present. After seeing the Irvings off, Anne and Charlotta clean and lock up Echo Lodge. Gilbert escorts Anne home and Anne suddenly and briefly sees Gilbert - and the idea of love blossoming out of deep-rooted friendship - as a possibility, but the notion quickly passes. Unbeknownst even to herself, Anne is ready to follow Diana into the world of womanhood.

# Chapter 28 - 30: The Prince Comes Back to the Enchanted Palace, Poetry and Prose, A Wedding at the Stone House Analysis

The final chapters of "Anne of Avonlea" fulfill Anne's wildest romantic fantasies, as the thwarted love of Miss Lavendar and Stephen Irving finally blossoms. She idealizes the situation, seeing the hand of fate crafting the reunion at every turn. However, reality's first slap in Anne's face comes with Diana's announcement of her engagement to Fred Wright. Fred is a far cry from the idealized romantic hero Anne and Diana always desired. In Anne's eyes, Fred is ordinary and pedestrian. She feels almost betrayed that Diana is willing to settle so far below their shared fantasy. Anne clings to her girlish dreams of an idealized melancholy and brooding true love. She would rather die an old maid than face the reality of a life that doesn't resemble the glamour of a romance novel. Similarly, Anne's idealized visions of Miss Lavendar's romance must go head to head with reality. Marilla gives an alternative version of events, in which a foolish quarrel led to a lifetime of loneliness for Miss Lavendar, while Stephen now very practically seeks a new wife to mother his son after an appropriate mourning period for his first one. While Anne can't deny the essential truth of Marilla's analysis, she makes a choice: "I think it's nicer...to look at it through poetry." (Page 264) Anne is romanticizing reality, and she willingly and consciously decides to do so. At this point, readers might wonder at Anne's willful adherence to her romantic fantasy. She obstinately ignores all the hardship that Miss Lavendar has endured since Stephen Irving left, twenty-five years of a broken heart that Miss Lavendar herself told Anne about. Anne glamorizes the fairy tell aspects of the story: like a damsel in distress, Miss Lavendar "had to" go through that period of privation in order to earn her "happily ever after." Anne holds on to an "ends justifies the means" attitude toward romance. She has yet to mature, and it may take Anne going through a painful hardship of her own to finally understand there is more to life than romance.

This is a point that Gilbert drives home for Anne. Gilbert forces Anne to look at Miss Lavendar's situation in another light when he says, "Wouldn't it have been more beautiful still, Anne, if there had been no separation or misunderstanding...if they had come hand in hand all the way through life, with no memories behind them but those which belonged to each other." (Page 275-6) Gilbert pushes Anne to see there is little romance in lost time. He subtly suggests that Anne view Miss Lavendar's story as a cautionary tale against pride and overzealous idealization. Anne responds to Gilbert's interpretation in a way that surprises herself. She suddenly sees that, "Perhaps, after all, romance did not come into one's life with pomp and blare, like a gay knight riding down; perhaps it crept to one's side like an old friend through quiet ways." (Page 276) Anne's revelation lasts only a moment, but it creates a cliffhanger at the novel's. This moment allows Anne a first stretch towards maturity, adulthood, and the mellowing of stringent and unattainable ideals. Without this small reflection of self-awareness, Anne as a character would stagnate, and her idealism would grow tedious to readers.

Modern readers may struggle with Montgomery's implicit message here: that only by seriously considering her romantic prospects does Anne attain a first step into "womanhood." Despite the fact that she has taught dozens of students for two years and helped to raise two children at home, Anne is only a child until she turns her thoughts toward marriage. However, the deeper message implies that by softening her idealistic stance on romance, Anne takes a first step toward a more nuanced view of the world, and such a nuanced view will make her more attuned to the struggles and choices of others, as well as less strident in her expectations and disappointments. The combined lessons of mortified shame at the failure of her teaching ideals, the happy surprise of an imperfect meeting with Mrs. Morgan, and the over-glamorized costliness of Miss Lavendar and Stephen Irving's reunion may propel Anne into the next chapter of her life with a more even-minded approach, just as Marilla always hoped for her.

# Characters

## Anne Shirley

Anne Shirley is the sixteen-year-old protagonist of 'Anne of Avonlea', the second in an eight-book series written by L.M. Montgomery. Anne's red hair has deepened to auburn, her freckles have mostly faded; she is a tall and willowy woman physically, but she is still a girl at heart. Anne has grown up enough to take on teaching at the Avonlea school and helping to raise orphaned twins Davy and Dora Keith. While responsibility has made Anne slightly more practical, she is still a starry-eyed dreamer, prone to romantic fantasies and lofty ideals. Anne feels a fierce communion with the natural world, imbuing the features of the landscape with their own set of feelings. Nature is alive to Anne in a more literal way than to most people. Anne is an eternal optimist; even when an event sends her to the depths of despair, she quickly bounces back to see the silver lining within every cloud. Anne prefers an emotional life that swings between the extremes of high and low: she would rather feel the worst despair in order to appreciate the intensity of the sweetest joy, rather than living life on a monotonously even keel, never feeling anything too deeply, good or bad. Anne is also fiercely loyal. For example, as she has grown up, she has recognized that Diana Barry, her first true friend, does not share her same hopes and dreams. Diana, who has a nature more earthbound than poetic, cannot see the world as Anne sees it, and Anne has outgrown the need for their friendship. But Anne would never dream of phasing Diana out of her life: Diana was generous and loyal to Anne when Anne needed her the most, and Anne will return that loyalty eternally. Similarly, Anne gave up a scholarship to go to college in order to stay home and help Marilla, whose eyesight is failing, at Green Gables. Marilla took Anne in against her better judgment, and Anne's gratitude pushes her to act selflessly when Marilla needs the same help Anne once required.

## Marilla Cuthbert

Marilla Cuthbert is Anne's guardian, who took her in four years prior to the start of the novel, and she is mistress of Green Gables. Marilla is grounded and practical, and has little use for Anne's poetical flights of fancy (though over the years she has grown to love Anne and accepts her for all her quirks). When Anne sinks into a despairing funk, Marilla is the first to advocate for an even temper, urging Anne to see life with a bit more perspective rather than letting herself get worked up over day-to-day events that will soon be forgotten. Marilla is bound by a Christian sense of duty, which guides her to take in the Keith twins, who are only distantly related to her, when they have no other family to turn to. She is acutely aware of the sacrifice Anne made so that she, Marilla, could stay at Green Gables, and she actively seeks a way to give Anne another opportunity to further her education. Though down-to-earth and unflappable, Marilla finds herself more drawn to people like Anne and Davy Keith, the more trouble-making of the twins, rather than his sister Dora, who is a quiet, obedient, and consequently dull little girl, a state of events that surprises even Marilla herself. She recognizes that Anne

and Davy add a spice to life with their curiosity and imaginations that is lacking in someone like Dora, who cannot deviate from the straight path set out before her.

## Miss Rachel Lynde

Mrs. Rachel Lynde is Marilla's long time neighbor and the Avonlea town gossip. Mrs. Lynde always speaks her mind, no matter how blunt and tactless she may come across. Her meddlesome frankness often leads people to a bad first impression of her., Mrs. Lynde has a conflicted relationship with Mr. Harrison, as he too has no fear of saying whatever is on his mind no matter how offensive it might sound. They often butt heads with their opinionated-ness. Though Anne recognizes Mrs. Lynde's frankness comes across as abrasive, she sympathizes with Mrs. Lynde's good intentions: Mrs. Lynde tells the truth in order to push people to improve themselves rather than wallowing in a lack of self-awareness. Mrs. Lynde is also committed to Church activities and helping the less fortunate through the church missions, and Anne respects her good heart, which is perfectly capable of kindness. Mrs. Lynde is so busy minding everyone else's business she doesn't notice the failing health of her own husband until it is too late.

## Mr. Harrison

Mr. Harrison is Anne's new neighbor in Avonlea, a middle-aged man living alone. Though he and Anne get off on the wrong foot when Anne's cow treads in Mr. Harrison's fields and both their quick tempers flare, they eventually become good friends. A seeming bachelor, Mr. Harrison causes scandal in the village with his bad housekeeping. Further scandal arises when an unknown wife suddenly appears in Avonlea to reclaim him. Mr. Harrison never denied being married, but no one ever asked him directly - and he enjoys the misunderstanding as a joke. He excuses his tactless behavior as "habit," but in truth Mr. Harrison takes a certain pleasure in being prickly and goading people into a reaction to his bluntness.

## Davy Keith

Davy Keith is one of six-year-old twins Marilla adopts when their mother, a distant cousin, dies and their uncle in western Canada cannot take them in. Davy often behaves badly, letting his immediate desires rule over a sense of propriety: he is greedy, lazy, and prone to bad choices just to see how people will react, without considering the consequences. He does not have a basic understanding of the difference between right and wrong until Anne explains it to him, often after he has already misbehaved. He is a handful for Marilla and Anne to contend with, asking inappropriate questions and refusing to behave as he should, yet both Marilla and Anne prefer him to his sister Dora, who is docile and bland. Davy, for all his faults, is charming and exuberant, and has a certain talent for "making" people love him.

## Dora Keith

Dora Keith is Davy's twin sister. Dora always behaves herself, not speaking unless spoken to, doing her chores without being told, and saying her prayers each night. Because she is so self-sufficient, she unintentionally makes Marilla and Anne feel like she needs them less. Dora needs no guidance, she already understands the right thing to do. Therefore, most of their attention and love goes to Davy.

## Diana Barry

Diana Barry has been Anne's best friend since Anne first came to Avonlea four years ago. Diana is the first person to offer Anne unconditional love and friendship, and their mutual loyalty is unending even as their priorities shift. Diana does not share Anne's romantic worldview - though as a child she also had idealized fantasies about adult life - and as she settles into womanhood, she is content with what reality offers her. Diana is a pretty girl with dark hair and fair skin, but she has the self-awareness to know by the time she reaches middle age she will be as portly as her own mother. She does not seek higher education as Anne does, and she is content to marry local boy Fred Wright, even though he is not the handsome hero she and Anne fantasized about as girls. Diana recognizes she and Fred will make a frumpy middle-aged couple, and she is perfectly happy to begin that journey with him. Anne cannot understand Diana's feelings about settling down, and Diana wonders when Anne will give up on ideals and learn to appreciate the small joys of reality. Yet neither girl would ever rebuke the other for her choices and attitudes; their friendship is unconditional and a comfort and joy to them both.

## Gilbert Blythe

Gilbert Blythe is a former schoolmate of Anne, who also teaches at a local school, saving money to go to college to study medicine. Gilbert has grown into a tall and handsome young man, with dark hair and hazel eyes, and many of the Avonlea girls would consider him excellent marriage material, especially coupling his appearance with his ambition to become a doctor. He and Anne lead the other teenagers of Avonlea, encouraging and guiding the Avonlea Village Improvement Society. Pleasing Anne is his main motivation. He has long loved her, though he knows better than to tell her yet. He is patient, biding his time and building a dream of a life with Anne until she is ready to start thinking about her adult future.

## Jane Andrews

Jane Andrews is a former schoolmate of Anne, and teaches at another local school. Though Anne and Jane are good friends, Jane represents Anne's polar opposite when it comes to their worldviews: while Anne idealistically hopes to touch the lives of her students and change how they approach life, seeking poetry and nurturing their

imaginations, Jane practically hopes to do what is asked of her as a teacher, get on the school inspector's roll of honor, and discipline her students when appropriate. Jane advocates whipping the children when their behavior merits it, while Anne fiercely vows never to use violence against her students. Jane is pragmatic and down-to-earth, exhibiting little imagination but a firm desire to do good work. Her appearance mirrors her personality: Jane is neither beautiful nor ugly, but solidly average looking.

## Paul Irving

Paul Irving is Anne's favorite student at the Avonlea School, a true kindred spirit who shares her poetic, vividly imagined view of the world. Paul reinforces Anne's bad habit of equating looks with personality: Paul is described as a beautiful child with "chestnut curls" and big blue eyes; his physical attractiveness mirrors the magnetism Anne feels toward his "beautiful" soul. Paul grew up in Boston but his father recently sent him to live with his grandmother on P.E.I. following the death of Paul's mother. He is inadvertently instrumental in reuniting his father with his former fiancée, Miss Lavendar, when he mentions her in a letter to his father. Paul approves of Miss Lavendar as a replacement mother to the dear American mother who died too young.

## Miss Lavendar

Miss Lavendar is a long time resident of the Avonlea area, living in a secluded cottage called Echo Lodge where Anne and Diana randomly stumble upon her one day when they get lost. Though an "old maid" unmarried at the age of forty-five, Miss Lavendar maintains a youthful appearance and attitude, except for her oddly snow white hair. Miss Lavendar was once engaged to Paul Irving's father Stephen but they quarreled a quarter-century ago and he left Prince Edward Island for America. She is another kindred spirit to Anne, happy to live in a fantasy world of beauty and poetry, but there is a certain amount of despair in her for the life she could have lived with Stephen but that she has instead spent alone and lonely.

## Charlotta the Fourth

Charlotta the Fourth is Miss Lavendar's serving girl. A practical and plainspoken teenager, she nevertheless worships the fanciful Miss Lavendar and Anne after she meets her. Her real name is Leonora, but Miss Lavendar calls her Charlotta the Fourth because her older sister was Miss Lavendar's first serving girl, and Miss Lavendar has called each successive sister by the same name in order to simplify things for her memory. Though Charlotta emulates Anne's casual grace and elegance, Charlotta is an average-looking and unimaginative girl with a kind heart and willingness to work hard.

## Anthony Pye

Anthony Pye is Anne's most difficult student. He tests her theory that any student can be won over with kindness and genuine attention. Anthony treats Anne with contempt until she snaps and whips him, breaking her vow to herself and leading her to a crisis of self-recrimination. However, Anthony treats her with good-natured respect after his whipping, further muddling Anne's beliefs.

## Priscilla Grant

Priscilla Grant is a friend of Anne's from Queen's College, where they received their teaching certification. Priscilla is teaching at a school close to Avonlea and occasionally accompanies Anne on her adventures.

## Mrs. Allan

Mrs. Allan is the Avonlea reverend's wife, and a good friend to Anne, helping her through her growing pains as she transitions from childhood to adulthood.

## Uncle Abe

Uncle Abe is a local Avonlea resident who consistently predicts the weather incorrectly - so consistently that it is reliable to expect the opposite of what he says. He gains notoriety when he "predicts" a major storm for a particular day in May, though in truth Anne and Gilbert credit him with the prediction in a local newspaper that they themselves have arbitrarily made.

## Fred Wright

Fred Wright is Anne's former schoolmate, and a particularly good friend of Gilbert. Fred subtly courts Diana on Anne's periphery, and the pair becomes engaged at the end of the novel. Fred is an average-looking young man, a far cry from the tall, dark, and handsome ideal Anne and Diana have long clung too. Anne cannot understand Diana's attraction and contentment to settle for unromantic Fred, as she, Anne, is still too immature to recognize that kindness and a good work ethic can make an appealing mate. Good looks fade but a good heart doesn't.

## Mrs. Morgan

Mrs. Morgan is a famous writer that Anne greatly admires. She is related to Priscilla Grant, who offers to bring her to Green Gables for tea. Anne's elaborately planned event implodes when they don't show up, but Priscilla brings Mrs. Morgan later in the summer for a surprise tea. Despite Anne's lack of preparation, the meal goes better than Anne

could have hoped. Mrs. Morgan is gray-haired and stout, which confuses Anne, who conflates virtues: she thinks because Mrs. Morgan is clever and successful, she should also be beautiful. The facts of Mrs. Morgan's appearance forces Anne to re-evaluate her idealistic theories.

## Emily Harrison

Emily Harrison is Mr. Harrison's wife, who arrives unexpectedly in Avonlea despite everyone's assumption that he is a bachelor. The Harrisons are opposites: Mr. Harrison is sloppy and prone to following his whims no matter how inappropriate. Mrs. Harrison is a neat freak determined to change Mr. Harrison's bad habits. Mrs. Harrison left her husband at their home in New Brunswick after a pride-infused quarrel over Ginger, the swearing parrot. Upon hearing that Mr. Harrison may be planning to marry again, Emily has come to claim him. Given some distance and perspective, both the Harrisons are more willing to compromise to make their relationship work. Mrs. Harrison reinforces many of the stereotypes of a woman's role in late nineteenth century society, throwing herself into homemaking with great enthusiasm.

# Objects/Places

## Dolly

Dolly is Anne's Jersey cow that breaks into Mr. Harrison's oat fields and destroys his crops. When Anne rediscovers Dolly in the field after promising Mr. Harrison it would not happen again, she sells Dolly on the spot to a neighbor - only to discover the cow in the field was not Dolly but Mr. Harrison's own Jersey cow.

## Ginger

Ginger is Mr. Harrison's pet parrot, a gift from his sailor brother. Ginger has a bad habit of swearing and repeating the most impolite things at the wrong time. Ginger drove a wedge in the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Harrison that lead to their separation and his move to Avonlea. Ginger is killed during a terrible hail and lightning storm accidentally predicted by Anne and Gilbert.

## The Avonlea Improvement Society

The Avonlea Village Improvement Society, often referred to as the A.V.I.S., is an organization of young people in Avonlea founded by Anne and Gilbert to develop the community through beautifying projects. Many of the older residents of Avonlea are against the society, believing they will bring unnecessary progress to the town.

## The Avonlea Hall

The Avonlea Hall is the first project of the A.V.I.S. They raise funds to re-shingle and paint the building where many types of events are held. The Hall is accidentally painted an unsightly blue, which causes the A.V.I.S. to fear Avonlea residents will ban them from future work, but instead rallies the community in favor of the A.V.I.S. and against the individual who make the mistake in color.

## The Willowware Platter

The Willowware Platter is a rare antique dish Anne borrows from Diana's Aunt Josephine on behalf of Mrs. Lynde and a church event. Davy accidentally breaks the platter when Anne leaves it on the stairs. Anne and Diana have an amusing adventure trying to find a replacement dish when Anne falls through a shed roof trying to peek into an absent neighbor's pantry to see if she owns the same platter.

## Hester Gray's Garden

Hester Gray's Garden is an old overgrown garden Anne and her friends discover on a day they meander through the Avonlea woods on a picnic. Diana tells the tale of the deserted garden, and its mistress who died young of consumption but was perfectly happy in the garden her husband planted for her, secluded from the world before she died.

## Echo Lodge

Echo Lodge is the home of Miss Lavendar Lewis, a secluded cottage that Anne and Diana discover when they get lost one day, so named because of the long echoes produced when one makes noise toward the valley that dips behind the house. Miss Lavendar quickly becomes a dear friend to the girls and has a star-crossed romantic history that kindles Anne's imagination.

## The Rock People

The Rock People are Paul Irving's imaginary friends built out of the stones on the seashores near his grandmother's house. Paul creates vivid stories about his Rock People, which he shares with Anne. The two are "kindred spirits" who both relish living in lovely fantasy worlds in communion with nature.

## Freckles

Freckles are Anne's main source of physical distress. She has a smattering across her otherwise well-shaped nose, and her vanity often causes her to cringe at the sight of them. This vanity gets her in trouble when she tries to erase the freckles using a home remedy lotion but accidentally rubs red dye on her nose instead, embarrassing herself in front of Mrs. Morgan, a famous author she admires and emulates.

## Charlottetown

Charlottetown is the capital of Prince Edward Island, and the main cosmopolitan area on the Island.

## Queen's

Queen's is the one or two year teacher's academy in Charlottetown. Anne, Gilbert, Priscilla, and Jane attended Queen's to get their certification for teaching.

## Redmond

Redmond is the four-year college Anne will attend to earn her bachelor's degree, and is located in Kingsport, Nova Scotia.

# Themes

## Ideals versus Reality

Throughout "Anne of Avonlea", Anne must contend with the constant contradiction between her idealized vision of scenarios and the reality the world offers her. She constantly gets her hopes up but her expectations are never met. Anne claims, "When I think something nice is going to happen I seem to fly right up on the wings of anticipation; and then the first thing I realize I drop down to earth with a thud." (Page 147) Anne's self-recrimination after whipping Anthony Pye represents one such time reality failed her. Anne is positive her teaching theories on kindness and attentiveness will win over all her students, but Anthony proves her wrong. The only thing he will respond to is violence, but Anne reproaches herself for failing to uphold her idealistic vision.

Anne is further disappointed during the tea for Mrs. Morgan, the famous writer. Despite her fantasies of a picture-perfect luncheon with delicious food, gleaming clean rooms, and witty conversation, Anne faces a rush of reality: Davy accidentally ruins her dessert, Mrs. Morgan does not appear, and she serves over-seasoned food to her remaining guests. When Priscilla brings Mrs. Morgan to Green Gables unannounced several weeks later, the situation is again far from Anne's ideal. She has no food in the house to offer guests, and she looks a mess from the housecleaning project she was working on. Even Mrs. Morgan does not live up to her ideals, being short and gray rather than tall and glamorous as Anne had fantasized.

The tea with Mrs. Morgan turns out much better than expected, and Anne can philosophically recognize that without time to get nervous and worry about serving, she had a much better time than she would have at her more formally planned event. Marilla urges Anne to maintain an even temper, reminding her if she does not build things up she cannot be disappointed. But Anne is honest enough with herself to understand that she prefers the occasional fall into despair as a price for the glory of soaring in her idealized fantasies. By dreaming big, Anne often gets better results than if she kept her ambitions in reasonable check.

## A Woman's Place

"Anne of Avonlea", set at the end of the nineteenth century, presents a view of women that modern readers will likely find old-fashioned. Anne helps Marilla maintain Green Gables and raise the Keith twins by teaching, one of the few professional opportunities open to women in this provincial, and primarily agricultural, society. At the end of the novel, as Anne plans to leave teaching and attend a full four-year college to earn a Bachelor's degree, readers get a glimpse of her neighbors scoffing at the notion of her receiving a higher education. Mrs. Andrews says, "I don't see that Anne needs any more education. She'll probably be marrying Gilbert Blythe...and what good will Latin and

Greek do her then? If they taught you at college how to manage a man there might be some sense in her going." (Page 252)

While Anne may be pushing a conventional boundary by seeking a degree, readers should note that generally, female characters in the novel don't fight against their societal role. Rather, their purpose is so ingrained that the women often embrace it. Even Anne dreams of setting the perfect scene of domestic harmony for Mrs. Morgan (spotless home, delicious and extraordinary meal), and twitches to clean Mr. Harrisons unkempt home (after making their tea at her own insistence). Later in the novel when Mr. Harrison's wife Emily appears out of the blue, readers see that he only married her to have a woman to keep house for him. In this way, Emily represents a stereotypical woman of the time, obsessed with cleaning the house and keeping up appearances when company comes. The pressure and competition within feminine roles is highlighted when Diana gets engaged, and one of her priorities is to begin crocheting doilies, because "Myra Gillis had thirty-seven doilies when she was married, and I'm determined I shall have as many as she had." (Page 267)

Even though contemporary readers may feel concerned when Mr. Harrison makes statements like "Women ain't logical" (Page 222), they must remember Montgomery wrote the novel in accordance with the norms of her time. She was not attempting to write a political or controversial treatise, but rather an anecdotal narrative of adventures in a small community. The fact that Anne supports herself and plans to attend college rather than simply marrying as Diana does may circuitously represent Montgomery's progressive views on the expanding place of women in society.

## Pride as a Vice

The sin of hubris, or pride, has a place in literature dating back to the Greek tragedy Oedipus. There are several instances of pride leading to negative consequences throughout "Anne of Avonlea". Anne's attitude about whipping students contains elements of pride. She believes her progressive teaching style ("There is some good in every person if you can find it. It is a teacher's duty to find and develop it." (Page 28)) will work with every single student and that she will win them over with love and kindness. She staunchly vows to never use corporal punishment, and her attitude indicates she feels she is above such backward practices. When Anne inevitably snaps and whips Anthony Pye, she doesn't care that her actions actually cause Anthony to respect her more and to start behaving in school, she is shaken by her own impulsive decision to act in a way she prided herself of being incapable of. She destroys her own sense of vanity when she cannot uphold her smug belief in the modern theories she learned at college. With her pride is devastated, she feels she has humiliated herself before her students, and she can't shake the feeling that, "I'm sure my theory of kindness can't be wrong." (Page 100).

Pride plays a major role in romantic entanglements as well. Miss Lavendar's engagement to Stephen Irving ended because she was too proud to accept his apology after they argue (Stephen does not offer his contrition in accordance with Miss

Lavendar's arbitrary timeline), and then Stephen is too proud to apologize to her again. As a result, it takes twenty-five years to reunite them. Mr. Harrison and his wife endure a separation for the same reason: he is too proud to get rid of his pet parrot when Emily demands it, and having already left their home, Emily is too proud to return when Mr. Harrison doesn't acquiesce. They are only reconciled by sheer coincidence: she catches wind of a rumor that Mr. Harrison is to marry and arrives in Avonlea to prevent such a scandal.

Though Anne is too young to seriously consider romance thus far, she shows signs that her pride will cause her to shun anything less than her absolute (and arbitrary) ideal in a mate. When Diana suggests that Anne's ideals may change, Anne responds, "Mine won't. And I couldn't care for any man who didn't fulfill it." (235). She would rather become an old maid than settle for anyone less than perfect.

Given the Christian values infused in the book, it is unsurprising that Montgomery focuses on one of "Seven Deadly Sins" as an outlet for teaching lessons in morality. Pride dovetails perfectly with idealism, as both concepts involve striving for or a belief in one's superiority. Is Anne's humiliation at whipping Anthony Pye due to an internal disappointment at failing to live up to her ideals, or based more on the fact that she reneged on a statement against corporal punishment that she made so publicly? She thought herself better than Jane Andrews, and she discovers she is not. Even Anne's vanity over her shapely nose but unsightly freckles walks a fine line between pride in her appearance and idealism about what a "good" and beautiful woman should look like. Anne's idealism makes her more susceptible to pride than to most other shortcomings, and Montgomery demonstrates again and again how Anne must temper her behavior to avoid falling into sinful habits.

Despite pride's place throughout the narrative, it is a topic dealt with gently; the consequences are never too dire or irreversible. Just as the book does not deal with an overriding conflict, climax, and resolution, the sins committed by its characters cannot and will not have life-or-death consequences. Montgomery writes of everyday life, and her morality tales teach lessons about struggles that the reader may have actually faced personally.

# Style

## Point of View

"Anne of Avonlea" is written from the point-of-view of a third-person omniscient narrator, which means that the narrator knows the inner thoughts of all of the characters. While the narration adheres closely to Anne's internal life, revealing her thoughts, dreams, and fantasies, the narrator occasionally gives the reader glimpses into other characters' thoughts in to expose their motivations and feelings. The novel contains long scenes of dialogue, allowing each character to divulge his or her thoughts in his or her uniquely expressive voice.

Occasionally, the third person narrator slips into the first person. For example, Anne and Diana reminisce about an incident when Anne jumped on a bed occupied by Diana's Aunt Josephine, and the narrator says, "Both girls laughed over the old memory...concerning which, if any of my readers are ignorant and curious, I must refer them to Anne's earlier history." (Page 152) This memory that the author refers to occurs in the first novel of the series, Anne of Green Gables. In these rare instances, L.M. Montgomery inserts herself into the action, acknowledging her role as storyteller. Because these first person moments are minimal, some readers might find them jarring. Readers suddenly wonder if they should know more about this first person narrator, and if she is a character in the novel as well. Is she merely a transcriber, or does she play a more active role in Anne's life? However, Montgomery intention was most likely to draw the reader more personally into Anne's world. These casual insertions suit the anecdotal tone of the novel. Most chapters relate individual vignettes about Anne, and this informal first person narration reinforces an idea of offhand stories being related between close friends.

## Setting

"Anne of Avonlea" is set on Prince Edward Island, a small province on the eastern coast of Canada. Montgomery goes to great lengths to describe the island: small interlinked communities nestled between great stretches of woods filled with a variety of flora and fauna. The novel takes place at the end of the nineteenth century, in a mainly agricultural community. There are no modern conveniences marring the physical landscape - no cars, no telephones, and only minimal railroads. There is a sense of a natural world that exists as it has for thousands of years, and Anne communes deeply with the soul of this old world.

Everyone knows everyone in the small town of Avonlea and the novel endorses social values, a responsibility to community, and Christian duty. For example Anne and Gilbert spearhead the Avonlea Village Improvement Society, not necessarily to bring modern progress to the town but to beautify and reinforce its institutions for the sake of all the residents. Anne sacrifices her college education to help Marilla take care of Green

Gables, returning the selfless favor that Marilla paid her by taking her in as an orphan. Marilla takes the Keith twins in despite the peripheral family connection because they need a home and she has one to give, no matter how much extra work they might cause her.

Because Montgomery wrote the novel over a century ago, "Anne of Avonlea" may strike contemporary readers as old-fashioned. There are clearly defined gender roles, with women taking responsible for the housework, work they often take on gladly, as when Anne visits Mr. Harrison's house and insists on making tea for them both, or her desire to clean up his disastrously unkempt home. Though both Anne and Gilbert are teachers, Gilbert plans to go to medical school, while many Avonlea residents think Anne would be wasting her time attending college, and believe she would be better off simply getting married. Despite Anne's misgivings, corporal punishment is clearly still an acceptable form of discipline in the school system, and many of Anne's conversations with Davy focus on reinforcing a clear-cut morality. She teaches him the conservative black-and-white of right and wrong typical of this time period: say your prayers, mind your manners, don't lie or cheat, and do unto others. There is but one God in the world of Anne Shirley, and he is a Christian God.

## Language and Meaning

The language of "Anne of Avonlea" is fairly old-fashioned. For example, Anne reprimands Davy for calling lies "whoppers." She tells him that the word is slang, and it is "wrong" for boys to use slang. Besides being an outdated slang term unfamiliar to modern readers, this exchange between Davy and Anne also reinforces the attitude of the novel that everything, from physical appearance right down to word choice, reflects a person's morality. A "good" boy does not use slang. When a character asks a question, Montgomery often uses the verb "query," which is not frequently used in today's world, except in formal or academic writing. Montgomery's use of language generally tends to this more formal style, reflecting a world concerned with public appearance and propriety.

The narration relies heavily on descriptive passages of the natural world to create a strong sense of place, but also to reinforce Anne's affinity for nature. One of the most defining characteristics of Anne's dialogue is her tendency to anthropomorphize nature. For example, on the first page Anne is distracted from schoolwork by "blue hazes scarfing the harvest slopes, little winds whispering elfishly in the poplars, and a dancing splendor of red poppies outflaming against the dark coppice of young firs in a corner of the cherry orchard." (Page 1) and in Chapter 13 Anne speaks of "making the acquaintance of spring. We none of us really know her yet...We'll make friends with wind and sky and sun." (Page 101) Nature is truly alive for Anne and informs her propensity for romance and poetry. Anne often quotes poems or speaks of fairies and imaginary fantasy worlds, which sets her at odds with most of the members of her community, who have a more practical and earthbound way of thinking and speaking.

The language of the novel is straightforward, yet modern readers may still find it difficult. Everything is longer than in modern literature: sentences, descriptive paragraphs, and dialogue. Characters speak in full sentences rather than clipped back and forth exchanges. The details of the descriptions - from the types of flowers in a garden to what the furniture is made of - will be unfamiliar to most readers, and may impede overall understanding of the story. In fact, Montgomery uses so much detail to create vivid, full sensory descriptions to draw the reader right into the physical world of the book that modern readers may have a hard time delineating what is important to the story and what is not. The novel requires patience and an appreciation for language for its own sake.

Because the novel is written in third-person omniscient narration, readers never have to guess what a character thinks or feels. Additionally, characters have no qualms speaking their minds, so there is little need to hunt for subtext or deeper intentions within the dialogue between characters. For example, even when Anne claims not to have any feelings for Gilbert Blythe, the narrator immediately indicates that Anne does not actually yet know or understand her own feelings.

## Structure

"Anne of Avonlea" is divided into thirty chapters, ranging from seven to twelve pages long. The novel has a gentle narrative structure: each chapter more relates an isolated anecdote, or one of Anne's misadventures will cycle through a series of chapters, but there is not much of an overriding plot to note. There is no antagonist for Anne to contend with, no inciting incident building to a specific climax. The novel relates the day-to-day life of kind and occasionally petty country folk. Though Anne is the heroine, the community-driven values of the novel are reflected in the structure: often Anne isn't at the center of the action, rather she observes the sketches of other community members. For example, though Anne quits teaching and prepares to attend college at the end of the novel, the final three chapters mainly focus on the reunion and wedding of Miss Lavendar and Stephen Irving. There is no driving force getting Anne to college; she views her sudden change in circumstances as an unexpected "bend in the road" rather than as a goal she strives to obtain. Contemporary readers might find this meandering pace tedious and lacking focus; for example, Chapter 11, merely reproduces school assignments from Anne's students as an amusement in a letter to Anne's friend. The chapter provides colorful sketches of the inner workings of the minds of children, and it is quietly amusing, but the entire chapter could be removed from the novel without being missed within the overall structure. The novel is written in the past tense, which further diminishes any sense of urgency. Modern readers will have to look beyond the elements of conflict and action generally expected in a novel in order to appreciate the quietly detailed character sketches and day-to-day triumphs and failures that the novel portrays.

# Quotes

"Mrs. Lynde was complaining the other day that it wasn't much of a world. She said whenever you looked forward to anything pleasant you were sure to be more or less disappointed...that nothing ever came up to your expectations. Well, perhaps that is true. But there is a good side to it too. The bad things don't always come up to your expectations either...they nearly always turn out ever so much better than you think" (Page 25).

"There is some good in every person if you can find it. It is a teacher's duty to find and develop it...It's far more important to influence the children aright than it is even to teach them the three R's" (Page 28).

"I'd like to add some beauty to life...I don't exactly want to make people know more...though I know that is the noblest ambition...but I'd love to make them have a pleasanter time because of me...to have some little joy or happy thought that would never have existed if I hadn't been born" (Page 53).

"We always love best the people who need us" (Page 83).

"This day's done and there's a new one coming tomorrow, with no mistakes in it yet" (Page 98).

"When I think something nice is going to happen I seem to fly right up on the wings of anticipation; and then the first thing I realize I drop down to earth with a thud. But really, Marilla, the flying part is glorious as long as it lasts...it's like soaring through a sunset. I think it almost pays for the thud" (Page 148).

"Perhaps it was nothing very dreadful after all. I think the little things in life often make more trouble than the big things" (Page 195).

"Dreams and make-believes are all very well in the daytime and the sunshine, but when dark and storm come they fail to satisfy. One wants real things then. But you don't know this... seventeen never knows it. At seventeen dreams do satisfy because you think the realities are waiting for you further on" (Page 200).

"That's the worst...or the best...of real life, Anne. It won't let you be miserable. It keeps on trying to make you comfortable...and succeeding...even when you're determined to be unhappy and romantic" (Pages 202 - 203).

"Those who knew Anne best felt, without realizing that they felt it, that her greatest attraction was the aura of possibility surrounding her...the power of future development that was in her. She seemed to walk in an atmosphere of things about to happen" (Pages 246 - 247).

"Perhaps she had not succeeded in "inspiring" any wonderful ambitions in her pupils, but she had taught them, more by her own sweet personality than by all her careful

precepts, that it was good and necessary in the years that were before them to live their lives finely and graciously, holding fast to truth and courtesy and kindness, keeping aloof from all that savored of falseness and meanness and vulgarity" (Page 253).

"Changes ain't totally pleasant but they're excellent things," said Mr. Harrison philosophically. "Two years is about long enough for things to stay exactly the same. If they stayed put any longer they might grow mossy" (Page 269).

"In this world you've just got to hope for the best and prepare for the worst and take whatever God sends" (Page 272).

# Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of life in a small town as represented by Avonlea. In your opinion, what would be the best part of small town life? The worst? Be sure to use examples from the text to support your position.

Compare and contrast Anne and Diana's perspectives on the world. Be sure to use examples from the text to support their positions. With whose worldview do you personally identify, Anne or Diana? Why?

Compare and contrast common attitudes toward corporal punishment in Anne's world and today's world. Do you think Anne was justified in using corporal punishment against Anthony Pye? Why or why not? Give three reasons you are for or against corporal punishment.

Explain what Marilla and Anne think motivates Davy's behavior. Do you agree or disagree with their assessment and why? Which twin do you prefer and why? Be sure to use examples from the text to support your position.

Anne claims, "When I think something nice is going to happen I seem to fly right up on the wings of anticipation; and then the first thing I realize I drop down to earth with a thud. But really, Marilla, the flying part is glorious as long as it lasts...it's like soaring through a sunset. I think it almost pays for the thud." (Page 148) Give three examples from the novel of Anne's pendulum swing from joy to despair. Do you think it is better to live in emotional extremes like Anne or to maintain an even keel like Marilla? Why?

Anne says of Hester Gray, "She had four beautiful years before she died...four years of perfect happiness, so I think she was to be envied more than pitied." (Page 108) Do you agree or disagree with Anne's assessment of Hester's life? What foreshadowing might be present regarding Anne's dreams and future goals for the rest of the series? Would you prefer four years of perfect happiness and an early death or forty mediocre years in which you never really achieved your goals?

Anne lives in a world before feminism, in which most women accepted the traditional roles of wife, mother, and homemaker, etc. Give three examples of how Anne conforms to or subverts these traditional roles. Do you think she could be considered a feminist? Why or why not? Be sure to use examples from the text to support your position.