

MARILLA. When the Lord puts us in certain circumstances He doesn't mean for us to imagine them away. And that reminds me. *(She picks up a card and hands it to ANNE:)* This is The Lord's Prayer. You'll devote your spare time today to learning it off by heart. There's to be no more of such praying as I heard last night.

ANNE. *(She looks at the card:)* Oh! I like this. I've heard it before at the asylum Sunday school. Oh, I'm so glad you thought of making me learn this, Miss...um...Marilla.

MARILLA. Well, just learn it now and hold your tongue.

(ANNE looks at the prayer for a moment, then:)

ANNE. Marilla, do you think that I shall ever have a bosom friend in Avonlea?

MARILLA. A *what* kind of friend?

ANNE. A bosom friend—a really kindred spirit to whom I can confide my inmost soul. I've dreamed of meeting her all my life. Do you think it's possible?

MARILLA. Well, I don't know. Diana Barry is about your age. You'll have to behave yourself, though. Mrs. Barry won't let Diana play with any little girl who isn't nice and good.

ANNE. Oh. *(Taking that in very gravely:)* What is Diana like? Is she pretty? Her hair isn't red, is it?

MARILLA. It seems impossible for you to stop talking if you've got anybody to listen to you. So go up to your room and learn that prayer.

(MARILLA exits. ANNE crosses to her room mumbling "for thine is the kingdom," etc. In the room she drops dramatically into a hard backed chair.)

ANNE. There. I know this prayer. Now I can imagine! This is a couch all heaped with gorgeous silken cushions, and I am reclining gracefully on it. I can see my reflection in that splendid big mirror hanging on the wall. My name is Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald—my skin is ivory and my hair is as black as midnight. No, it isn't—I can't make that seem real.

(She goes up to the little mirror.)

You're only Anne of Green Gables. But it's a million times nicer to be Anne of Green Gables than Anne of nowhere in particular.

(She runs to the window. Music builds under to the end.)

Oh, that must be Diana's house way over there. *(Calling:)* Hello, Diana! I hope you'll be my bosom friend! *(To no one in particular:)* HELLO! I'm Anne of Green Gables!

(Lights. Music tag.)

Scene 7

(Lights up. One week later, early evening, MARILLA busy in the kitchen. MRS. LYNDE knocks.)

MRS. LYNDE. Marilla?

MARILLA. Rachel. Come in.

MRS. LYNDE. *(Entering the kitchen:)* Well, Marilla, I'll just tell you plain that I think you're doing a mighty foolish thing—a risky thing, that's what.

MARILLA. Lovely evening, Rachel. Glad you could drop by.

MRS. LYNDE. Bringing a strange child into your house.

MARILLA. I will admit I've had some qualms myself.

MRS. LYNDE. Couldn't you have just sent her back?

MARILLA. Well, Rachel, I suppose we could, but Matthew took a fancy to her. And she's a real bright little thing. It's only a week now, but the house seems a different place already.

MRS. LYNDE. It's a great responsibility you've taken on yourself—and no experience with children. But I don't want to discourage you I'm sure, Marilla.

MARILLA. I'm not feeling very discouraged, Rachel. Now, I don't suppose you really came over just to see me. *(Calls out door:)* Anne!

ANNE. *(Running in breathless and red faced:)* Yes, Marilla?

MRS. LYNDE. Well, they didn't pick you for your looks. She's terrible skinny, Marilla. *(Sits regally.)* Come here, child, and let me have

a look at you. Lawful heart, did you ever see such freckles? And hair as red as carrots! Come here, child, I say.

ANNE. (*Leaping across the floor to stand right in front of MRS. LYNDE. She stamps her foot.*) I hate you! I hate you—I hate you—I hate you! How dare you call me skinny and ugly? How dare you say I'm freckled and redheaded? You are a rude, impolite, unfeeling woman!

MARILLA. Anne!

ANNE. How would you like to have such things said about you? How would you like to be told that you are fat and clumsy and... and don't have a spark of imagination in you?

MRS. LYNDE. Did anybody ever see such a temper!

MARILLA. Anne! Go to your room and stay there until I come up.

(ANNE runs crying out of the room, throws herself on her bed.)

MRS. LYNDE. Well, I don't envy you your job bringing *that* up, Marilla.

MARILLA. You shouldn't have twitted her about her looks, Rachel.

MRS. LYNDE. Marilla Cuthbert, you don't mean to say...

MARILLA. No, I'm not trying to excuse her. She's been very naughty and I'll give her a good talking to. But we must make allowances—she's never been taught what is right. And you *were* too hard on her, Rachel.

MRS. LYNDE. Well! I see that I'll have to be very careful what I say after this, Marilla, since the fine feelings of orphans, brought from goodness knows where, have to be considered before anything else. If you'll take my advice—which I suppose you won't do—you'll give her that "talking to" with a fair-sized birch switch.

(She sweeps out as grandly as she can. MARILLA watches her go. Turns back toward Anne's room. Distressed and confused, she reluctantly picks up a wooden spoon, tests its efficacy on her hand and hides it behind her back. She crosses into Anne's room.)

MARILLA. Well, you made a fine exhibition of yourself. I don't say that Mrs. Lynde was... exactly right. She's much too outspoken. But that's no excuse. She...she was a stranger...and an older person... and my visitor. You were rude and saucy and...and

(She goes for the spoon, stops. ANNE is unaware of this struggle.)

And, you must go to her and tell her you are very sorry for your bad temper and ask her to forgive you.

ANNE. Oh, I can never do that. You can punish me in any way you like, Marilla. You can shut me up in a dark, damp dungeon inhabited by snakes and toads and feed me only on bread and water. But I cannot ask Mrs. Lynde to forgive me.

MARILLA. We're not in the habit of shutting people up in dark, damp dungeons. But apologize to Mrs. Lynde you must and shall and you'll stay here in your room until you're ready to do it.

ANNE. I shall have to stay here forever then.

MARILLA. You'll have the night to think over your conduct and come to a better frame of mind.

(Exit. Lights. Music tag.)

Scene 8

(Lights up. The next evening, ANNE is still on her bed. MATTHEW is pretending to sleep. He watches MARILLA go out the kitchen door with a pail, then he crosses quietly to Anne's door. He taps gently and whispers.)

MATTHEW. Anne. (*He opens the door and peeks in.*) How are you making it?

ANNE. Pretty well. I imagine a good deal.

MATTHEW. Marilla's a dreadful determined woman—dreadful determined. Don't you think you'd better do it and have it over with?

ANNE. Do you mean apologize to Mrs. Lynde?

MATTHEW. Just smooth it over so to speak.

ANNE. I suppose I could do it for you—if you really want me to—

MATTHEW. It's been terrible lonesome downstairs all day without you. Just go and smooth things over—that's a good girl.

ANNE. It would be true to say I am sorry *now*. All right, I'll tell Marilla that I've repented.

MATTHEW. (*Beginning to exit:*) That's right—that's right, Anne. But don't tell Marilla I said anything about it.

(*He is heading for the kitchen, she goes to the door and whispers after him.*)

ANNE. Wild horses won't drag the secret from me. (*A beat. Whispers loudly:*) Matthew?

MATTHEW. (*Trying to get quietly back to his chair before MARILLA comes back. Whispers:*) Yes?

ANNE. How would wild horses drag a secret from a person anyhow?

MATTHEW. Well...I just don't know.

(*He gets to the chair just as MARILLA comes back into the kitchen and puts the pail back. ANNE hears her and calls quietly from the stairs.*)

ANNE. Marilla.

MARILLA. Well?

ANNE. I'm sorry I lost my temper and said rude things, and I'm willing to go and tell Mrs. Lynde so.

MARILLA. Very well. (*She gets her shawl and hat.*) Come along then. We'll go over right now.

ANNE. (*Entering the kitchen:*) Oh, could we wait for five minutes, please?

MARILLA. Whatever for?

ANNE. (*She floats toward the door in a reverie.*) I'm imagining out what I must say to Mrs. Lynde.

MARILLA. (*Pushing ANNE out:*) Ummmhh!

(*Lights. Music tag.*)

Scene 9

(*Mrs. Lynde's garden. MARILLA and ANNE cross to her.*)

MARILLA. Rachel?

MRS. LYNDE. Yes?

MARILLA. Anne has something to tell you.

MRS. LYNDE. Very well. (*To ANNE:*) Well?

(*ANNE floats in, still in her reverie of planning her apology. MARILLA is unsure how this is going to go. ANNE doesn't look sufficiently penitent. She catches ANNE's eye and motions her to go ahead. ANNE immediately hangs her head and throws herself on her knees at MRS. LYNDE's feet. The women are astonished. This apology is not false in any way. It is romantic. It is hugely honest—larger than life.*)

ANNE. Oh, Mrs. Lynde, I am so extremely sorry. I have behaved terribly to you—and I've disgraced the dear friends, Matthew and Marilla, who have let me stay at Green Gables even though I'm not a boy. It was very wicked of me to fly into a temper because you told me the truth. My hair *is* red and I *am* freckled and skinny and ugly. What I said to *you* was true, too, but I shouldn't have said it. Oh, please, please, forgive me. If you refuse it will be a lifelong sorrow on a poor little orphan girl.

(*She raises her clasped hands in supplication and bows her head awaiting her judgment. The women look at each other, stunned. Finally.*)

MRS. LYNDE. There, there, get up, child. Of course I forgive you. I guess I was a little too hard on you, anyway. It can't be denied your hair is terrible red; but I knew a redheaded girl once whose hair darkened to a real handsome auburn when she grew up. I wouldn't be a mite surprised if yours did, too—not a mite.

ANNE. Oh, Mrs. Lynde! You have given me a hope.

MARILLA. All right, Anne. Run along now, and wait for me in the lane.

(*ANNE leaves. MARILLA turns back to face MRS. LYNDE.*)

Rachel...?