***Anne of Green Gables***

***Chapter 12***

### ***A Solemn Vow and Promise***

***Summary:***

* Marilla hears about Anne's flower crown at church and scolds Anne about it. Anne's upset because she had no idea that would have made Marilla mad.
* Marilla takes Anne next door to visit a girl her age, Diana Barry. Anne's nervous Diana won't like her but Marilla says it's Diana's strict mother that Anne should be worried about.
* When they arrive, Mrs. Barry sends Diana and Anne outside into their gorgeous flower garden.
* Anne immediately asks Diana if she will swear to be her friend forever. Wow, Anne. Get to know a girl first.
* After Anne explaining that swearing an oath is not the same thing as cursing, Diana agrees. They say their oath, and Diana says that Anne is "queer" (meaning weird), but she likes her anyway.
* On the walk home, Anne happily tells Marilla about the many plans she and Diana have made.
* Then Matthew shows up with chocolates from the store. Jackpot! Marilla's annoyed but lets Anne have them. Anne asks Marilla if she can give half of them to Diana.
* That night, Marilla tells Matthew that she's glad Anne's generous, because she hates stingy children. And she grudgingly admits she's getting fond of Anne.

***Synopsis:***

Marilla, warning Anne not to make any startling speeches or to use such long words, walks Anne to Orchard Slope to meet Diana Barry. Trembling at the prospect of meeting a bosom friend, Anne fears the Barry girl will not like her. Diana Barry, with her mother's black eyes and hair, is bashful with the new girl, but in a gush Anne asks the just-acquainted girl to swear to be her bosom friend for ever and ever. Glad-hearted to have a new playmate, the bookworm Diana takes the solemn oath of friendship. Anne declares to Marilla that she has a kindred spirit in Diana and that they plan to build a playhouse in Mr. Bell's birch grove. Matthew, coming home with chocolates for Anne, is blissful. Anne asks to share half the chocolates with Diana, because in so doing "the other half will taste twice as sweet to me." Marilla grants that the girl is not stingy, and admits to Matthew how fond she has grown of her.

Eager to say her prayers, having much to be thankful for, Anne's heart begins to flourish in the care of the Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert. In addition, like the Barry garden, wild and riotous in delight, Anne is overjoyed in having a friend. Marilla's affection grows for the girl that she could not now imagine having turned away.

***Brief Summary:***

Mrs. Rachel tells Marilla that Anne put flowers in her hat at church, making herself the laughingstock of the congregation. When Marilla reprimands Anne for doing something so inappropriate, Anne bursts into tears. She does not understand what she did wrong, since the flowers were beautiful and other girls had artificial flowers in their hats. Anne’s mood quickly changes when she learns they are to visit the Barrys that afternoon. Anne has dreamed of becoming bosom friends with Diana Barry, and she now trembles with nervousness. Marilla warns her not to say anything startling or to use too many big words in front of Mrs. Barry, who has a reputation for strictness.

At the Barry’s house, Anne and Diana go out to the garden to play and immediately strike up a friendship. Anne’s first words to Diana are a heartfelt proposition of friendship. She creates an oath of eternal devotion for them to swear. On the walk back to Green Gables, Anne blissfully tells Marilla that she has found a kindred spirit in the plump, pretty, raven-haired Diana. When Matthew gives Anne chocolates he has bought for her, Anne asks to be allowed to share them with Diana. She says she will enjoy her chocolate even more if she can give half of it to her new friend. Marilla, pleased by Anne’s generous spirit, tells Matthew she cannot imagine what life would be like without Anne.

***Critical Study(Ch9-12):***

In each succeeding chapter, Montgomery illustrates her characters in greater depth and detail. Each chapter contains a small story, and as the stories accumulate, we can trace the evolution of the characters and their relationships with one another. In Chapters 9 through 12, Anne blows up at Mrs. Rachel, apologizes, goes to church, and meets Diana Barry. Over the course of these events, Anne demonstrates her willingness to learn and to follow the rules of society. She begins by throwing a wild tantrum, but she ends by apologizing for her bad deeds. Matthew changes too: at the beginning of the novel, he dislikes interacting with women, even hesitating to nod at them on the street. In these chapters, however, he becomes a warm father figure who takes increasing pleasure in spoiling Anne. Matthew and Anne are “kindred spirits,” and in his dealings with Anne, Matthew shows a flair for parenting. In Chapter 10, for instance, Anne agrees to apologize to Mrs. Rachel not because it is the right thing to do or because Marilla threatens her but because she wants to oblige Matthew.

Anne struggles to do the right thing, but Avonlea’s code of manners is unfamiliar to her, and she acts like a well-meaning tourist in a foreign country, violating the standards of propriety by accident. Although anxious to do what people consider right, Anne acts according to her own moral code. She feels that because Mrs. Rachel insults her, she has a right to show her anger, and because she does not truly believe she should apologize to Mrs. Rachel, she makes the apology a piece of theater. Anne’s moral code contrasts with Marilla’s. Marilla frequently observes something Anne does, like decorating her hat with wildflowers, and deems it ridiculous because it is unconventional. Anne, however, does not understand how she can be considered bad when her behavior makes perfect sense to her and when she is not trying to hurt anyone.

Despite her criticisms of Anne, Marilla changes over the course of these chapters, even revising her own moral code because of Anne’s different perspective. Sometimes when Marilla feels she should reprimand Anne, she thinks about the logic of such a scolding and decides against criticizing. For example, when Anne returns from church and calls the preacher unimaginative and boring, Marilla admits to herself that she shares these exact feelings, although she has been unwilling to acknowledge them in the past. As Marilla and Anne begin to understand each other better, they start to question their own standards of judgment and to accept each other’s moral codes.***Critical Analysis:***

It is a week before Marilla finds out that Anne went to church with a flower garland on her hat. Marilla tells Anne that she should never do that again and that many people have been saying it reflects poorly on Marilla. Anne’s eyes fill with tears and she tells Marilla that she should send her back to the orphan asylum. Marilla comforts Anne and tells her that she can go meet [Diana Barry](https://www.gradesaver.com/anne-of-green-gables/study-guide/character-list#diana-barry), the girl who lives nearby, that afternoon. Anne becomes very worried about the possibility of Diana and Diana’s strict mother not liking her.

At the Barry house, Anne introduces herself politely to [Mrs. Barry](https://www.gradesaver.com/anne-of-green-gables/study-guide/character-list#mrs-barry). Mrs. Barry tells Marilla and Anne that Diana reads too much and encourages the girls to go outside and play together. Outside, Anne and Diana both seem very eager to become close friends. They swear an oath to be bosom friends forever and spend the rest of their time playing in nature. Anne teaches Diana to name things in fanciful ways, such as naming a log bridge “the Dryad’s Bubble” (p. 112). When Marilla and Anne arrive home, Matthew presents Anne with some chocolate candies. Anne quickly decides that she will save half and give them to Diana. When Anne has gone upstairs, Marilla reflects on the fact that. though Anne has been at Green Gables for only three weeks, Marilla already cannot imagine life without her.

***Significance:***

Of course Marilla hears about the wildflowers on Anne's Sunday school hat, and of course she lectures Anne about them, asking, "What on earth put you up to such a caper?" Though Anne points out many girls at church had bouquets pinned to their dresses—and many had artificial flowers on their hats—Marilla is worried about the bad impression Anne must have made. Mrs. Lynde has told Marilla "people talked about it something dreadful," and Marilla makes her desire clear: "All I want is that you should behave like other little girls and not make yourself ridiculous."

Marilla may be more anxious than usual because she is about to bring Anne with her to meet [Diana Barry](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Anne-of-Green-Gables/character-analysis/#Diana_Barry), who lives close by and is Anne's age. As she has done in the past, she warns Anne of the importance of impressing Diana's strict mother. This is because "if she doesn't like you it won't matter how much Diana does ... Don't make any of your startling speeches."

Diana is reading a book when they arrive. Her mother suggests she show Anne her garden instead of "straining your eyes over that book." She adds to Marilla that Diana reads entirely too much.

Out in the garden the two girls stare bashfully at each other until Anne breaks the silence by asking, "Do you think you can like me a little—enough to be my bosom friend?" It's a strange question for someone Anne has just met, but Diana laughs and agrees. She's startled when Anne asks her to swear to be friendly forever and responds, "It's dreadfully wicked to swear." Anne reassures her this kind of swearing is all right, and the two girls solemnly swear fidelity forever. Diana with a laugh, "I heard before that you were queer. But I believe I'm going to like you real well."

By the time Marilla is ready to take Anne home, the girls have made all kinds of plans—building a playhouse, gathering shells, renaming various landmarks so they'll sound more poetic. "All I hope is you won't talk Diana to death," says Marilla, reminding Anne she'll need to do her chores before she can play.

It makes Anne even happier to discover Matthew has bought her some candy. Immediately Anne asks if she can give half of the chocolates to Diana, delighted "to think I have something to give her."

Anne is lucky to find another kindred spirit in Diana. Her first few sentences to Diana are definitely what Marilla would call one of her "startling speeches." Unfortunately [Montgomery](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Anne-of-Green-Gables/author/) doesn't reveal more of the girls' first meeting; it's a relief, later, to hear Anne describe the many activities they've planned. They've obviously hit it off. The rapport may be partly because they're the same age and live near each other, but Anne also seems to have a gift for charming people quite different from herself.

It's also fortunate Diana likes to read the same kinds of books as Anne: she's likely to have read a story in which two girls become eternal friends. In the 19th and early 20th centuries friendships between girls were often deeply romantic. Girl crushes were common; schoolgirls sent each other love letters and, like Anne and Diana, swore eternal vows to one another. As a child Montgomery and her friend Amanda were so close that schoolmates called them Mollie and Pollie. The girls promised to be faithful friends forever by writing "Notes of Promise" to each other. These were witnessed by two of their friends to make them seem even more official. At about 12 Montgomery and her friends began exchanging love poems. A poem Montgomery received praised her "wondrous braids of nut-brown hair"; one she wrote called a friend "my own sweet wildwood rose."

Montgomery loved flowers all her life, and the Barrys' garden is described with loving care. It's a fitting spot for the beginning of such an important relationship.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

The following Friday, [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) hears from [Mrs. Lynde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-rachel-lynde) about [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley)’s flower-decorated hat and scolds her for drawing attention to herself. Anne starts to cry—she didn’t think she’d done anything wrong; lots of girls had artificial flowers on their hats, after all. Marilla comforts Anne with the news that [Diana Barry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) is home from a trip, so Anne can meet her today.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Marilla sees Anne’s impulsive behavior as reflecting poorly on Marilla herself. For her part, Anne doesn’t understand why she has to conform exactly to the other girls’ behavior. She’s not used to Avonlea’s small-town atmosphere—where anyone who sticks out is talked about—or to others’ lack of originality.

***Summary Part 2:***

Right away [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) begins shaking with nervousness and excitement. She worries that [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) won’t like her. [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) says Anne should worry about [Mrs. Barry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters) instead—she’ll expect Anne to be perfectly polite, or else she won’t let Diana play with her. They walk to Orchard Slope, where Anne nervously greets Mrs. Barry. Diana, a black-haired girl with a cheerful expression, is reading a book on the couch. Mrs. Barry tells them to go outside—Diana strains her eyes too much over books, she says, so perhaps a playmate will get her outdoors more.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Always inclined to extremes of emotion, Anne lets her imagination run away with her as she thinks of possible outcomes of meeting Diana for the first time—what if they aren’t bosom friends after all? Since she’s never had a real-life friend before, there’s lots of pressure on this first meeting.

***Summary Part 3:***

In the Barrys’ lush garden, [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) and [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) look at each other shyly. Finally, Anne asks Diana if she thinks she could like Anne enough to become her “bosom friend.” Diana laughs, as she often does, and says she thinks so—she’s glad Anne has come to Green Gables, because there are no other girls nearby, and Diana’s sisters are too little. Anne asks Diana if she’ll swear to be friends forever. Diana is shocked, but Anne explains that by “swearing,” she just means “vowing and promising solemnly.”

***Analysis Part 3:***

In Anne’s mind, becoming a “bosom friend” isn’t a complicated matter—it’s mainly a question of one’s sincerity and openness to friendship. Since Diana is an open-hearted person who simply desires a playmate, the two are a good match, even before they know much about each other.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) agrees, so they join hands, and [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) solemnly swears to be Diana’s bosom friend forever. Diana laughingly repeats the oath and says that Anne is as strange as she’s heard, but she thinks she’ll like her a lot. By the end of the visit, the two girls are walking arm in arm. As she and [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) walk home, Anne says she’s the happiest girl on the Island and chatters happily about all the plans she and Diana have made. Marilla just reminds her that she can’t play all the time; she’ll have her chores to do, too.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Anne and Diana’s friendship gets off to a promising start—Diana is ready to like Anne, no matter what strange things she’s heard about her, and to cheerfully go along with Anne’s imaginative fancies. Because of their mutual openness, the foundation for their friendship is already strong, and there’s every indication that the friendship will live up to Anne’s cherished hopes for a “bosom friend” of her very own.

***Summary Part 5:***

When they get home, they discover that [Matthew](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/matthew-cuthbert) has bought [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) chocolates. Anne happily plans to share half with [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry). Though [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) grumbles about the candy, she privately admires Anne’s generosity. She also tells Matthew that even though Anne has only lived here for three weeks, it feels like she’s been here forever. She’s glad she kept Anne—but she warns Matthew to stop “looking I-told-you-so.”

***Analysis Part 5:***

More and more, Marilla is warming up to the strange orphan girl she never wanted or expected—showing that even in an orderly household that’s stuck in its ways, “family” can be a surprisingly flexible concept.