***Anne of Green Gables***

***Chapter 16***

### ***Diana is Invited to Tea with Tragic Results***

***Summary:***

* Marilla has a ladies meeting one afternoon, so she tells Anne she can invite Diana over for tea.
* Anne's really stoked to do this, since hosting a tea seems like a grown-up activity.
* Marilla tells Anne they can have a bottle of raspberry cordial—which is kept on the second shelf of the pantry—and a cookie each.
* Diana shows up for tea in her second-best dress and the girls are hilariously polite to each other at first. Eventually they act more like themselves and go out to the orchard to pick apples.
* When they go inside, Anne looks for the raspberry cordial. It's on a higher pantry shelf than Marilla said.
* Uh-oh.
* Anne tells Anne to help herself and goes off to stoke the fire and prepare the tea, chatting at Diana the whole time.
* Diana's really into the raspberry cordial. She has seconds, and then thirds.
* When Anne brings out tea, Diana says she doesn't feel well and walks very unsteadily out the door.
* Can you guess what the cordial really was?
* The next day, Anne returns from Mrs. Lynde's in tears, telling Marilla that Diana's mom is furious at her because she got Diana drunk.
* Marilla checks out the pantry and realizes she'd put the cordial somewhere else. Anne had given Diana currant wine by accident.
* Marilla visits Mrs. Barry to explain, but Mrs. Barry doesn't believe her. Marilla gets mad and calls Diana greedy for having three tumblerfuls of anything. (Which probably didn't help the situation, but props to Marilla for defending Anne.)
* Anne tried to apologize to Mrs. Barry herself. No dice.
* Marilla laughs after Anne falls asleep, but then feels bad for Anne and kisses her on the cheek.

***Synopsis:***

One beautiful October morning, Marilla announces that she will be away for the day and says that Anne should assume responsibility for running the house. She adds that Anne may invite Diana over for tea, leaving specific instructions about what Anne can serve Diana. During their tea, the girls, clad in their second-best dresses, act ladylike and proper, inquiring after each other’s health and families until Anne suggests they go outside and pick apples, at which point they resume their normal girlish familiarity.

When the girls return inside for tea, Diana accepts a cup of raspberry cordial, a drink reserved for special occasions that Marilla has given the girls permission to drink that day. As Diana drinks a second glass and then a third, Anne tells stories about her ineptness in the kitchen. One time, she forgot to put flour in a cake. Another time, she neglected to cover plum-pudding sauce with a cloth, which she was using as a white veil. The next day, she found a mouse drowned in the sauce; she had planned to tell Marilla, but then got lost in another daydream. Two very stylish people came to tea, and just as Marilla was about to serve the plum pudding and sauce, Anne remembered her mistake and shouted out the whole mouse story, much to Marilla’s embarrassment. When Anne finishes her story, Diana stands up unsteadily and announces she does not feel well and must leave. Anne presses her to stay, but Diana insists on stumbling home. Two days later, Anne hears from Mrs. Rachel that Diana was not sick but drunk. Marilla realizes that Anne mistook the bottle of red currant wine for raspberry cordial and accidentally gave Diana alcohol. Mrs. Barry is furious, assuming that Anne intentionally intoxicated Diana. When Marilla goes to explain to Mrs. Barry that Anne made an innocent mistake, she is met with a stony countenance and harsh words. Mrs. Barry will not forgive Anne and has ordered Diana never to speak to Anne again. Anne begs Mrs. Barry to soften her sentence, but Mrs. Barry is resolute. Anne despairs at the prospect of being separated from Diana forever.

***Analysis***:

At an afternoon meeting at the Aid Society on her agenda, Marilla proposes that Anne invite Diana for tea. Refusing Anne the rosebud spray tea-set and use of the parlor, Marilla offers Anne the half-full bottle of raspberry cordial. Diana, dressed in her second best dress, shows up at Anne's door just as Marilla is off to Carmody, shaking hands with Anne. After exchanging pleasantries and retreating to the orchard for Red Sweetings and gossip, Anne searches for the raspberry cordial in the pantry. Anne, having had her fill of Red Sweetings, pours a tumbler of the cordial for Diana, who drinks three generous cupfuls. Putting her hand to her head, Diana declares that she must go home because she is feeling awfully sick. That following Sunday Anne learns from Mrs. Lynde that Mrs. Barry blames Anne for getting Diana drunk. Mrs. Barry says that she will never allow Diana to play with the wicked little girl again. Marilla investigates and realizes she is to blame, finding a bottle of homemade currant wine on the pantry shelf, the cordial having been placed in the cellar. Marilla sets out to Mrs. Barry's to set things right but returns in a huff, declaring Mrs. Barry a most disagreeable woman. Determined to take fate into her own hands Anne pleads her case to Mrs. Barry, who declares her unfit to play with her little Diana. Marilla laughs in telling of Anne's youthful crisis, but her heart melts at the sight of her: "' Poor little soul,' she murmured, lifting a loose curl of hair from the child's tear-stained face. Then she bent down and kissed the flushed cheek on the pillow."

Growing up proves to be a series of trials for the young Anne Shirley. Accidentally having gotten her best friend drunk there is nothing to be done, as Mrs. Barry is suspicious of her eloquence and her theatrics. Anne retreats not into fantasy, dissolving that night into tears  but has a newfound ally in Marilla.

***Critical Study(Ch 13-16):***

The schoolroom at Avonlea absorbs Anne and becomes the focus of her world. For the first time, Anne befriends many children her age. Instead of talking to plants or her reflection, as she did in the orphan asylum, she find people with whom she can interact. Although she has not had any practice socializing with peers, she manages to learn quickly the rules and manners of the social world. Similarly, her lack of formal education does not prevent her from absorbing the rules of reading, writing, and mathematics. As Anne tries to make sense of the new rules, she has some difficulty reconciling them with her own code of behavior. For example, Diana and all the other girls are accustomed to Gilbert Blythe’s barbs and have grown to enjoy attention from him. Anne, a stranger to such friendly teasing, is offended and enraged when he calls her “Carrots.” Unfamiliar with the ways in which young people interact with each other, she cannot understand that Gilbert’s comment is not meant to be an insult but is rather just an instance of teasing.

As Anne’s social world changes, the content of her communication changes. Before, she talks to Marilla about nature and her imagination, but now she cannot stop talking about school events and friends. Her absorption in the minutiae of the girls’ social events reveals that, despite her eccentricities, Anne is not fundamentally different from the other girls her age. Her quick assimilation into the society of the schoolhouse suggests the power of peers to influence behavior, as well as the human ability to learn rapidly and conform to cultural norms.

The schoolroom replicates the adult world. The girls gossip as Mrs. Rachel does, for example, and their play mimics adult behavior. At tea, Anne and Diana act ladylike in imitation of their elders. Montgomery illustrates the danger of mimicking adult behavior with the episode of Diana’s drunkenness. Although Marilla and Mrs. Barry constantly prepare their girls to act like proper adults, when the girls make an innocent mistake in the process of trying to act grown up, the adults punish them.

Marilla continues to change and become a better parent. Just as Anne has to apologize earlier for lashing out at Mrs. Rachel, in these chapters Marilla learns to apologize for her mistaken assumptions. She feels bad about forcing Anne to lie and admits to her own mistake. Marilla becomes increasingly effective at managing Anne’s stubbornness and hot temper. When Anne comes home from school set on never returning, Marilla agrees to let her stay home. This leniency is new to Marilla, a product of her growing understanding of Anne and the mellowing effect that Anne has on her.

***Critical Analysis:***

One day in October, Marilla tells Anne that she can have Diana over for tea, just the two of them. Anne is very excited because she finds this to be a mature responsibility. Marilla tells Anne that she can serve Diana raspberry cordial from the pantry along with some fruit and pastries. When Diana arrives, both girls are dressed in fancy clothes and try to talk to each other politely, which comes across as very boring and silly. Soon, however, they are chatting away like the young girls they are. When Anne goes into the pantry to find the raspberry cordial, she doesn’t see it immediately, but eventually, she finds it tucked away on the back of a shelf. She brings it out and serves it to Diana, though she doesn’t drink any herself. Anne tells Diana about some mistakes she has made while trying to learn to cook recently, including forgetting to put flour in a cake, all the while serving Diana two more glasses of raspberry cordial. Suddenly, Diana starts to feel sick. She walks in an unsteady and dizzy manner and says that she has to go home. Anne is very disappointed and tries to get Diana to stay for tea or a bit of lunch, but Diana goes home.

Two days later, Marilla sends Anne on an errand to Mrs. Rachel Lynde’s house. Anne comes back crying because she finds out that [Mrs. Barry](https://www.gradesaver.com/anne-of-green-gables/study-guide/character-list#mrs-barry) says Anne sent Diana home drunk. Mrs. Barry has also declared that Diana and Anne can never play together again. Marilla realizes that Anne didn’t give Diana raspberry cordial, but instead served her currant wine. Marilla says that she is the one to blame since the raspberry cordial wasn’t where she said it would be. Marilla suggests that Anne go apologize to Mrs. Barry and tell her what happened, and when Anne says that she is too scared, Marilla says she will go. Marilla returns to Green Gables shortly thereafter, saying that Mrs. Barry is an unreasonable woman. Anne goes to the Barry house and apologizes to Mrs. Barry herself, but Mrs. Barry remains firm. That night, Anne cries herself to sleep once again, and Marilla feels such tenderness toward the sleeping girl that she kisses her on the cheek.

***Significance:***

It's a Saturday morning in October, and Anne is ecstatic: Marilla, who will be out for the afternoon, has just suggested Anne invite Diana over to tea. Anne may serve her guest cherry preserves, fruit cake, and cookies to eat; to drink there's half a bottle of raspberry cordial.

That afternoon Diana arrives promptly and knocks at the door instead of running in as she usually would. The girls shake hands and move into the sitting room, where they hold stilted "adult" conversation until they relax back into themselves and run out to the orchard. They spend most of the afternoon there, eating apples while Diana fills Anne in with all the school gossip.

When they finally return to the house, Anne can't find the raspberry cordial. At last it turns up on a different pantry shelf than Marilla had specified. Anne brings it out. Anne herself is too full of apples to want any cordial, but Diana pours herself a glassful and sips it admiringly. Anne steps out to stir up the fire, and when she comes back, Diana is beginning her second glass of cordial. "The nicest I ever drank," she tells Anne, and takes a third glass.

Anne launches into one of her extended monologues about cooking; a story she thought up the last time she made a cake; the mouse that drowned in a pitcher of plum pudding sauce; and the fancy visitors who almost poured that sauce onto their pudding. Suddenly she stops: Diana has lurched to her feet.

She tells Anne thickly, "I'm awful sick ... I—I—must go right home." Anne suggests "a bit of fruit cake" and some cherry preserves, but Diana insists on leaving. "I'm awful dizzy," she says, staggering. Anne walks her home and returns to Green Gables, crying all the way.

It's too rainy for Anne to leave the house on Sunday. On Monday afternoon Marilla sends her on an errand to Mrs. Lynde's. She's alarmed when Anne rushes back into the house in a torrent of tears. Mrs. Lynde has just heard from Mrs. Barry that Anne got Diana drunk. (Being Mrs. Lynde, she helpfully passes on the information.) Never again, says Mrs. Barry, will Anne be allowed to play with Diana.

When Anne tells Marilla all she gave Diana was raspberry cordial, Marilla checks the pantry. There she realizes Anne accidentally served Diana some of Marilla's homemade currant wine. Marilla is sure Mrs. Barry will forgive Anne when she learns about the mistake; in fact, she'll walk over to the Barrys' house herself to explain. She returns in a wrathful mood. Mrs. Barry doesn't believe her. On top of that, she doesn't approve of Marilla's making currant wine in the first place. Marilla retorted by telling "her plainly that currant wine wasn't meant to be drunk three tumblerfuls at a time."

Anne drums up her courage and walks to the Barrys' house herself. Mrs. Barry answers the knock, and her face hardens. Anne begs for forgiveness, using some of her most elevated language, which angers Mrs. Barry even more: she thinks Anne is making fun of her. Anne tells Marilla, "My last hope is gone ... I do NOT think she is a well-bred woman." Later that night Marilla checks on Anne and finds she's cried herself to sleep. "Pour little soul," she murmurs, kissing Anne on the cheek.

Readers might wonder if raspberry cordial and currant wine could really be mistaken for each other. Raspberry cordial is made from fresh raspberry juice sweetened with sugar and brightened with lemon juice. It's nonalcoholic and brilliantly red—a perfect fancy drink for children. Currant wine is made from fresh currant juice, sugar, and yeast, and it *is* alcoholic. Marilla's currant wine is prized throughout Avonlea, but she keeps it on hand only for sickness. In the 19th century and earlier a variety of alcoholic drinks were believed to be a healthful stimulant for invalids. It's not as strong as today's red wines; on the other hand, as Marilla says, it's not meant to be drunk by the glassful. That Diana downs so much currant wine is likely why she gets as drunk as she does.

However, it is somewhat surprising Diana thinks the wine is better than raspberry cordial. It's not as sweet as the cordial, it's not as pretty, and it does taste like wine—or at least like cough syrup. When Diana says, "I didn't know raspberry cordial was so nice," it's not clear whether she means she's tasted raspberry cordial that wasn't as good as the wine, or she's never tasted raspberry cordial and hence has no idea how it should taste. But readers know Diana enjoys her food, so perhaps she likes the taste of wine more than some children might.

There's so much humor in this chapter that readers may not notice Marilla's offhand reference to the way Mrs. Barry and the old minister feel about her currant wine. One reason Mrs. Barry is so furious with Anne is she has disapproved of Marilla's currant wine all along. Mrs. Barry does not drink alcohol and does not believe other people should either.

But the old Avonlea minister's disapproval of Marilla's making currant wine points to something else. In the 19th century strict Presbyterians believed drinking alcohol was sinful—some still do—and replaced the wine traditionally used at Communion with grape juice. Many modern Presbyterian churches have returned to using wine at Communion; many have stayed with grape juice. Evidently the former minister of Marilla's church believed in abstaining.

Mrs. Barry gives the impression she *wants* to find things to disapprove of. And if someone can be disapproving enough to find [Marilla Cuthbert](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Anne-of-Green-Gables/character-analysis/#Marilla_Cuthbert) lax, that person must be very strict indeed.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

It’s a brilliant October day, and [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) has to go to an Aid Society meeting in a nearby town. [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) will have to get supper for [Matthew](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/matthew-cuthbert) and [Jerry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters) the farmhand. In the meantime, she’s allowed to invite [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) over for afternoon tea. She can even use the leftover raspberry cordial she’ll find in the cupboard. Anne rushes over to Orchard Slope to tell Diana, and shortly after Marilla drives off in the buggy, Diana appears at Green Gables in her second-best dress. The girls sit in the sitting room, asking about each other’s families and farm crops, until Anne forgets to be formal, and they decide to pick apples in the orchard. They spend most of the afternoon there, Diana catching Anne up on all the Avonlea school gossip.

***Analysis Part 1:***

As Marilla kindly perceives, having tea together is a chance for the girls to pretend to be “grown up,” as well as an opportunity to catch up on some of what Anne’s been missing at school. Marilla’s gesture—including the fact that she entrusts Anne with making supper—also indicates that she’s growing in her trust of Anne.

***Summary Part 2:***

When [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) mentions [Gilbert Blythe](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/gilbert-blythe), [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) changes the subject by suggesting they go inside and have some raspberry cordial. But when she looks in the pantry where [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) had said the cordial would be, she doesn’t see it. Then she finds a bottle of red liquid hidden on the top shelf and offers Diana a tumbler full, declining to drink any herself, since she’s too full of apples. By the time Anne gets back from the kitchen, Diana has drunk two additional glasses of the raspberry cordial. Anne goes off on a long digression about her various cooking fiascoes, and by the time she’s finished, Diana has risen from the table shakily, holding her head. She tells Anne she feels “awful sick” and must go home. Anne fails to dissuade her and finally accompanies her dizzy friend back to the Barrys’, weeping with disappointment as she walks home to ready Matthew’s tea.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Anne continues to stubbornly ignore any mention of the hated Gilbert. Then, something goes awry with tea, as Diana has an unexpected reaction to the “raspberry cordial.” Anne is grieved that her elegant tea with Diana is abruptly cut short by the sudden “sickness.”

***Summary Part 3:***

Two days later, [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) returns from an errand to [Mrs. Lynde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-rachel-lynde)’s in tears. She confesses to [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) that [Mrs. Barry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters) told Mrs. Lynde that Anne had sent [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) home in bad shape the other day—Diana was drunk. Anne is a terrible little girl, Mrs. Barry went on, and Diana will never be allowed to play with her again. Marilla, baffled, goes to the pantry to investigate. When she sees the bottle Anne had poured, she is shocked to recognize her three-year-old currant wine. She remembers that she’d actually put the raspberry cordial in the cellar. She tries not to laugh as she explains the matter to Anne.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Because of Marilla’s mistake with the raspberry cordial, Anne accidentally got Diana drunk on wine instead. Mrs. Barry believes this was intentional on Anne’s part. Marilla sees the humor of the situation, further showing that she’s softening where Anne is concerned and taking a more humorous attitude toward life in general.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) recoils at facing [Mrs. Barry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters), so [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) agrees to speak to her instead. When Marilla returns from Orchard Slope, however, she’s furious. Mrs. Barry refused to believe Marilla, and she criticized her for making such strong wine. Marilla had retorted that a greedy child like [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) ought to be spanked for drinking three glasses of anything. That evening, Anne sneaks over to Orchard Slope and timidly begs Mrs. Barry’s forgiveness. Mrs. Barry isn’t as easily softened as [Mrs. Lynde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-rachel-lynde), however, and suspects Anne is making fun of her by using big words like “intoxicate.” That night, Marilla has a good laugh while telling the whole story to [Matthew](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/matthew-cuthbert), but when she checks on Anne in her bedroom, she can’t help but kiss the tear-stained sleeping face.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Marilla’s anger shows that she’s defensive on Anne’s behalf, not just her own, and that she sees Anne as being fully part of her family. Mrs. Barry’s refusal to believe Anne brings out Marilla’s protective side—and also her tenderness, as she kisses the sleeping girl. When Anne tries taking things into her own hands, however, it backfires: Mrs. Barry doesn’t understand Anne’s tendency to be dramatic and interprets it as mockery.