***Anne of Green Gables***

***Chapter 19***

### ***A Concert, a Catastrophe, a Confession***

***Summary:***

* Diana signals Anne to come over (they have a signal system by flashing light into each other's windows). When they do, Diana tells her she wants to take Anne to the Debating Club concert for her birthday. Anne can stay overnight and they can sleep in the spare room, which Anne considers a high honor.
* Only problem? Marilla won't let Anne go.
* Matthew disagrees with Marilla. His strategy for convincing her? Repeating over and over "I think you ought to let Anne go" until Marilla gives in. The strategy works.
* The winter drive is beautiful, the concert is fun, and Anne and Diana get back to the Barry house at eleven, when everyone's already in bed.
* Anne suggests that they race: whoever gets to the spare room bed first wins. But when they jump on the bed, they find themselves on top of an angry old woman who's already in there.
* It's Diana's great aunt Josephine, who must have arrived in town early.
* The next day, Anne visits Mrs. Lynde, who tells her that Josephine's furious with the whole Barry family. She's leaving early and no longer wants to pay for Diana's music lessons.
* Anne apologizes to Josephine, and her over-the-top apology amuses the woman. She decides to forgive Diana and stay if Anne will visit her.
* Anne and Josephine become friends. When Josephine leaves, she hopes Anne will visit, and promises her she can stay in her spare room.

***Synopsis:***

Anne and Diana arrange to signal each other from their bedroom windows with flashes of a candle. Five flashes show in the window, meaning "Hurry over - I have an important message." Anne runs out the door. She returns with the important news that Diana has invited her to a school concert and a sleepover at the Barrys, with the rare honor of sleeping in the spare room. Having her doubts but swaying to Matthew's wishes, Marilla consents. The night "a series of 'thrills'" for Anne, from the tinkle of the sleigh-bells to the evening recitations (save that of Gilbert Blythe), the two girls return to the Barry home sated by the evening's events. Girlishly racing through the parlor, bounding onto the bed in the spare room they are met by a gasp and a cry. Escaping up the stairs, Diana explains that they have just pounced upon Mr. Barry's Aunt Josephine. Mrs. Lynde informs Anne the following morning that the ill-tempered aunt is determined to cut short her visit and return to town, denying Diana the music lessons she promised to pay for. Anne sets off yet again to reason with an adult and set things right. Anne's disarming chatter delights the elderly aunt and in her she finds a possible kindred spirit, or at least one who thoroughly enjoys her company. Aunt Barry stays the month and invites Anne to visit her in town.

Anne succeeds in another trial of youth, through charm, intelligence and loyalty to her dear friend. While spirited and rambunctious as usual, she takes pause to consider her behavior  and in Miss Josephine Barry she has won over another fan with her wit and the sincerity of her apology.

***Critical Study:***

Anne explains to Marilla that in celebration of Diana’s birthday, Mrs. Barry has agreed to let Diana invite Anne to a Debating Club concert and spend the night in the Barrys’ spare bedroom. Anne can hardly contain her excitement, but Marilla declares that she cannot go because little girls have no business at late-night concerts. Matthew disagrees with Marilla’s decision and tells her so until she relents and gives Anne permission to go. On the day of the concert, Anne and Diana take pleasure in everything from getting dressed to riding Diana’s cousins’ pung sleigh to listening to scholars recite poetry and sing at the concert. After the concert, they return to the Barrys’ house. They change into their nightgowns, and Anne proposes that they race to the spare bedroom. The girls charge in and leap onto the bed, landing right on Diana’s crotchety aunt, Miss Josephine Barry, who arrived for her visit unexpectedly early.

Anne is disappointed at having to sleep with the toddler, Minnie May, rather than in the spare bedroom, but the following day returns to Green Gables happy and satisfied. Later, Mrs. Rachel reports that the Barry house has been in an uproar all afternoon. Aunt Josephine, angered at being awoken in the middle of the night, has decided to cut short her visit and rescind her offer to pay for Diana’s music lessons. She is a rich old lady, used to being treated decorously, and will not listen to Diana’s pleas. Anne wants to remedy the situation since she, not Diana, proposed the race into the spare bedroom. She goes to the Barry house and enters the old lady’s room, terrified but bold, and begins to confess. The old lady is amused by Anne’s elevated way of speaking. She agrees to give Diana her music lessons and stay the full month at Avonlea, under the condition that Anne talk to her at the Barrys’ and then visit her in town.

***Critical Analysis:***

One evening, Anne asks Marilla whether she can go to Diana’s house. Anne knows that Diana has something to tell her because they have devised a system of signals by placing candles on their window sills. Marilla lets Anne go to Diana’s house for ten minutes, and Anne comes back with the news: it is Diana’s birthday the next day and she is inviting Anne to come to her house after school, go to a Debating Club concert in the evening, and then sleep over at her house. Marilla tells Anne "no" multiple times, but Matthew comes in and tells Marilla that she should let Anne go. Marilla eventually gives up arguing with Matthew and tells Anne she can go.

The next day, Anne is distracted all day at school. All the students talk about the Debating Club concert since many of their older siblings will be participating. After school, Anne goes to Diana’s house; they get dressed and do their hair together. They ride in a sleigh along with Diana’s cousins to the Debating Club concert. Anne is greatly moved by many of the recitations, except for the one by Gilbert. When they get back to Diana’s house, Diana tells Anne that she thinks Gilbert looked at Anne when reciting a romantic section of his recitation, and Anne changes the subject by suggesting they race to the bed in the spare room. They run to the room and jump on the bed at the same time, and they suddenly find that there is someone sleeping in the bed! They frantically jump out of the bed and hurry upstairs to sleep elsewhere. On the way up, Diana tells Anne that the person in the bed must have been her [Aunt Josephine](https://www.gradesaver.com/anne-of-green-gables/study-guide/character-list#aunt-josephine).

In the morning, Anne goes home before Mrs. Barry finds out about the girls jumping on Aunt Josephine. However, later in the day, Mrs. Rachel Lynde tells Anne that Diana is in trouble; Aunt Josephine will be leaving the next day and won’t pay for Diana’s music lessons as she had promised. Anne blames herself for the situation and goes over to the Barry house to try to make things right. Diana does not seem upset when Anne arrives, and she tries to convince Anne not to talk to Aunt Josephine. Anne nevertheless explains what happened to Aunt Josephine and asks for forgiveness. Surprisingly, Aunt Josephine is amused by Anne and even laughs at some of the things Anne says. Aunt Josephine asks Anne to tell her more about herself, but Anne says that she has to go home. Aunt Josephine says that she will stay in Avonlea for a month, as planned, so long as Anne will come over and talk to her again.

Over the month, Anne does visit Aunt Josephine many more times, and they become friends. When Aunt Josephine goes back home, she tells Anne to come to visit her.

***Significance:***

It's February and Diana's birthday. To celebrate, she wants Anne to come to the Debating Club concert at the Avonlea Hall and then spend the night at her house. As a special treat the girls will get to sleep in the Barrys' spare room.

Marilla says no. She doesn't want Anne "gadding about to concerts and staying out all hours of the night." Predictably, Anne is crushed; surprisingly, Matthew intervenes on her behalf. He states, "It ain't interfering to have your own opinion." Finally Marilla relents.

Anne and Diana have a wonderful day and evening. There's a "perfectly elegant tea" at Diana's house, a primping session, and a sleigh ride to the concert, which is everything Anne could have dreamed about. Back at Diana's house, the girls get ready for bed in front of the parlor fire. Then Anne suggests a race to the spare room bed. The night-gowned girls run down the parlor through the spare-room door and jump onto the bed.

Suddenly "something—moved beneath them." "Merciful goodness!" says somebody "in muffled accents." It's Diana's wealthy Aunt Josephine. Unbeknownst to the girls, she arrived while they were at the concert and was given a bed in—where else?—the spare room.

Aunt Josephine is furious. She planned to stay a month but is now going to leave the next day. She planned to pay for music lessons for Diana, but now she has no wish to help such a tomboy. When she hears all this from Mrs. Lynde, Anne bravely heads over to the Barrys' house to apologize.

Aunt Josephine is "knitting fiercely by the fire, her wrath quite unappeased." Anne shrinkingly confesses the spare room adventure was her idea, not Diana's. "If you must be cross with anyone, be cross with me," Anne begs, adding Miss Barry should try to imagine how the girls felt when they realized someone was in the bed. "I suppose you are used to sleeping in spare rooms," Anne finishes, "but just imagine what you would feel like if you were a little orphan girl."

Aunt Josephine actually laughs, then invites Anne to sit down and talk to her. Anne politely declines—"But before I go I do wish you would tell me if you will forgive Diana." Aunt Josephine promises she will, as long as Anne comes to visit her at the Barrys'. And sometime, when she's home, she'll invite Anne to stay "in my very sparest spare-room bed."

It is typical of Anne to lead a race to jump onto a bed where someone's cranky old aunt is sleeping. Diana shows her mettle by "gasping with laughter" as she explains what must have happened, rather than being horrified. And the scene is, indeed, appallingly funny.

Aunt Josephine is a formidable woman—but again, readers can trust Anne to stand up to her. Most likely, nothing but Anne's intervention would have calmed down the peppery old lady. But once she's won over, Aunt Josephine becomes one more member of the matriarchy concerned with Anne's welfare. Aunt Josephine has the advantage of being rich, and she will reward Anne's courage under fire in more ways than one.

In this chapter readers also see Matthew standing up to Marilla for the first time. One of the many benefits Anne brings him is an improved ability to express his feelings. Matthew doesn't have many words at his disposal, but he doesn't need them here. His repeating "I think you ought to let Anne go" finally wears Marilla out. It's a victory for Matthew as well as Anne.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

One February evening, [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) is desperate to go to [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry)’s. She explains to [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) that they’ve devised a system of signaling to each other from their windows by passing cardboard back and forth in front of a candle to make flashes. Diana has just flashed five times, meaning she has something important to tell. Though she thinks the system is silly, Marilla gives Anne 10 minutes to talk to Diana. When Anne gets back, she tells Marilla that she’s invited to spend the night with Diana for her birthday tomorrow and to attend a Debating Club concert along with Diana and her visiting cousins.

***Analysis Part 1:***

For all her complaints about Anne’s silliness, Marilla is fairly indulgent of her—although Diana’s invitation, to a more “grown-up” outing, will challenge that.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) thinks [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) is too young to start going out to concerts in the evening. Anne protests that the poetry recitations will have good moral lessons, and the patriotic songs will be nearly as good as hymns—even the minister will be making a speech. But her arguments are to no avail, and she goes to bed in tears. [Matthew](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/matthew-cuthbert), who appeared to be asleep during the whole exchange, says that Anne ought to be allowed. Marilla, however, maintains that Anne will catch a cold and be unsettled for days by all the excitement.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Anne tries to make the case that the concert outing will be edifying, and Matthew characteristically takes her side. But Marilla, always concerned about Anne’s tendency to let her excitement and imagination run away with her, tries to nip the idea in the bud.

***Summary Part 3:***

The next morning, on his way to the barn, [Matthew](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/matthew-cuthbert) again tells [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) that he thinks [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) should be allowed to go. Marilla seethes for a moment, then agrees, since Matthew won’t be content with anything else. Anne flies joyfully from the pantry with a wet dishcloth in hand, oblivious to Marilla’s scolding. She has always felt so left out when other schoolgirls talked about going to concerts, and it was an awful feeling. Matthew understood, and it’s nice to be understood.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Matthew, though he’s more indulgent than Marilla, also sees that Anne has been left out of many things in life, and that finally getting to participate in things like the concert, like other girls her age, is encouraging to her. Marilla’s emphasis on responsibility and restraint tends to balance out Matthew’s more indulgent approach, both emphasizing things Anne needs to learn or experience while growing up.

***Summary Part 4:***

At school, the students can talk of nothing but the concert. The Avonlea Debating Club often puts on public events, but this one, supporting the library, will charge an admission fee of ten cents. Many students have older siblings who are participating in the entertainment. After school, [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) have tea at her house and then retire to Diana’s room to dress. They spend a long time arranging their hair, and Anne imagines that she has fancier clothes. Then they crowd into a sleigh with Diana’s cousins, flying off to the concert with bells tinkling and a brilliant sunset over the sea.

Mishaps, Milestones, and Growing Up Theme Icon

***Analysis Part 4:***

Outings like the concert are a big part of the social life of Avonlea youth, and the experience of getting dressed up and attending an evening performance is a big growing-up moment for Anne—even when she has to fall back on her imagination to “improve” certain details.

Friendship Theme Icon

***Summary Part 5:***

At the concert, [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) is the most easily thrilled audience member. She delights in the poetry recitations, songs, and sketches. But when [Gilbert Blythe](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/gilbert-blythe) recites “Bingen on the Rhine,” Anne pointedly reads a library book instead, and refuses to clap when he’s finished. When the happy concertgoers get home, Anne and [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) talk over everything while changing by the fire. Diana tells Anne that when Gilbert came to the line, “There’s another, not a sister,” he looked straight at her. Anne refuses to hear about it.

***Analysis Part 5:***

“Bingen on the Rhine” is a poem by 19th century English poet Caroline Norton, an emotional, romantic piece about a dying soldier’s last words. After sending messages to his mother and sister, the soldier speaks tenderly of his beloved (“You’d have known her by the merriment that sparkled in her eye”). By directing these lines to Anne, Gilbert shows that he already has strong romantic feelings for her. Anne convinces herself that she couldn’t care less.

***Summary Part 6:***

The two girls race to the spare bed in which they’ll be sleeping. As they leap into bed, however, something moves underneath them, and they hear a muffled voice exclaim, “Merciful goodness!” Before they know it, the girls are flying upstairs in the cold and dark. Laughing helplessly, [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) explains that it’s [Aunt Josephine](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/aunt-josephine-barry), though she doesn’t know why she was sleeping in the spare bedroom—she’ll be furious. Aunt Josephine is her father’s elderly aunt who is very proper and will scold them terribly about this. They hear nothing at breakfast the next morning, however.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Though they’re starting to participate in more “grown up” outings, Anne and Diana are very much still like little girls in other respects—such as racing and jumping into bed, which quickly turns into another mishap.

***Summary Part 7:***

Later that afternoon, [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) stops by [Mrs. Lynde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-rachel-lynde)’s house. [Mrs. Barry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters) stopped by a few minutes ago, Rachel tells her, and said that [Aunt Josephine](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/aunt-josephine-barry) was terribly angry about what happened last night. Aunt Josephine was supposed to stay for a month, but she’s threatening to return to Charlottetown tomorrow and to revoke the gift of music lessons for [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry), since Diana’s proven to be a “tomboy.” Aunt Josephine is wealthy, and the Barrys have tried to stay on her good side.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Aunt Josephine thinks that the two girls are terribly childish and unladylike in their behavior. As in the situation with Mrs. Lynde, Anne has offended someone through her impulsiveness, but this time, it has consequences for somebody besides herself.

***Summary Part 8:***

Anne is dismayed, wondering how she keeps getting not just herself, but also people she loves into trouble. [Mrs. Lynde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-rachel-lynde) tells her it’s because she’s too impulsive and never stops to think before she speaks or acts. Sadly, Anne walks to Orchard Slope and, to [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry)’s horror, says that she’s going to speak to [Aunt Josephine](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/aunt-josephine-barry) herself—last night was her fault, after all. With her hands clasped beseechingly, Anne approaches Aunt Josephine and begs for forgiveness. They were only trying to have fun, and the blame should fall on Anne, not Diana, whose heart is set on music lessons. Aunt Josephine’s fierce gaze softens, but she still scolds Anne for frightening her like that. Anne says she can imagine how Aunt Josephine felt, and asks Aunt Josephine if she can imagine the fright she and Diana felt. And they’d so been looking forward to the honor of sleeping in the spare bedroom.

***Analysis Part 8:***

Though Anne keeps getting herself and others into trouble, she also shows her maturity in that she’s willing to take responsibility when she gets into trouble. In such cases, her tendency to offer humorously dramatic yet heartfelt apologies works to her advantage, often winning even hard-hearted people’s sympathy.

***Summary Part 9:***

At this, [Aunt Josephine](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/aunt-josephine-barry) actually bursts out laughing. She admits that her imagination has grown rusty from disuse and invites Anne to sit down and introduce herself. Anne explains that she has to go home to [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert), but she hopes that Aunt Josephine will stay in Avonlea. Aunt Josephine agrees, as long as Anne visits her sometimes. That night, Aunt Josephine gives Diana a bracelet and says she wants to stay and get better acquainted with that amusing “Anne-girl.” Before the end of her stay, she makes Anne promise to come and visit her in Charlottetown. Anne tells Marilla that Aunt Josephine “was a kindred spirit after all.”

***Analysis Part 9:***

Sure enough, Anne’s sincerity wins over even Aunt Josephine and straightens out the tension in the Barry household. From this experience, Anne discovers that even someone who didn’t seem like a kindred spirit might be one after all. In other words, while some people (like Diana) are clearly meant from the start to be “bosom friends,” one can’t always tell right away if someone who appears unfriendly might actually become a dear friend.