***Anne of Green Gables***

***Chapter 22***

### ***Anne Comes to Grief in an Affair of Honor***

***Summary:***

* Another year, another Diana Barry birthday party. The scene is set: the girls are in the Barry garden after tea.
* They soon start daring each other to do things. In Avonlea, it's completely taboo to refuse a dare.
* Anne scorns Josie Pye when Josie successfully walks a fence in response to a dare, saying it isn't that impressive, and she knew a girl who could walk the ridgepole of a roof. See where this is going?
* Josie dares Anne to walk the ridgepole of the Barry roof.
* Diana begs Anne to refuse, but Anne's too proud. She tells Diana she can have her pearl bead ring if she dies, and climbs up to the roof.
* Anne walks a few steps, and then falls off.
* Luckily, she falls off the side where the roof extends low over a porch, so she doesn't die. But she's in a lot of pain. Mr. Barry has to carry her home.
* When Marilla sees Mr. Barry carrying Anne limp in his arms, she realizes she loves her. Not that she says so. But she's scared.
* Anne explains what happened, then faints from the pain.
* The doctor pronounces her ankle broken. He sets it, but she has to stay in bed for several weeks.
* Anne has many visitors for the next three weeks, but she's excited to get back to school and meet their new lady teacher.

***Synopsis:***

Diana gives a "small and select" party for all the girls in their class, for whom "daring" has become all the rage. Carrie Sloane dares Ruby Gillis to climb an old oak tree, Josie Pye dares Jane Andrews to hop on one leg around the Barry garden, and Anne Shirley dares Josie Pye to walk the board fence. Anne, sniffing at Josie Pye's great success on the board fence, tells the pugnacious girl that she knew a girl that walked the ridge-pole of a roof. So it was that Josie Pye dared Anne Shirley to walk the ridge-pole of Mrs. Barry's roof. Anne bequeaths her pearl bead ring to Diana should she perish in defense of her honor. Slipping off the roof into the Virginia creeper beneath, the pale-faced Anne gives the girls a terrible fright. Marilla spots Mr. Barry carrying Anne across the bridge to Green Gables: "In the sudden stab of fear that pierced to her very heart she realized what Anne had come to mean to her However, now she knew as she hurried wildly down the slope that Anne was dearer to her than anything on earth." Anne, having broken her ankle, reassures Marilla that she might have broken her neck. Homebound, Anne's much anticipated introduction to Miss Stacy, the new school mistress, is forestalled. In her confinement, the young girl exults in the many visitors she receives, even Superintendent Bell, whose prayers she is now sorry she criticized.

Ever the optimist, Anne reckons that she could have broken her neck, not just her ankle: "Let us look on the bright side of things." Marilla, pierced to her heart at the sight of the girl in Mr. Barry's arms, fears the worst, and reveals how deeply she has grown to love Anne. This is a remarkable expression of emotion from the woman previously so restrained in emotion (and in her affection for Anne).

***Significance:***A week later, Diana throws a party at her house and invites some of the girls from the Avonlea school, including Anne. After having tea, the girls begin daring one another, which is a very popular activity with the children their age in Avonlea. The dares start off relatively easy, with one girl climbing a caterpillar-infested tree and another hopping around the garden on one foot. The daring gets more intense when Anne dares Josie to walk along the top of a fence. Josie walks the fence easily. Anne, wanting to save face, says that walking a board fence isn’t impressive and that she once knew a girl who walked the ridgepole of a roof. Josie immediately dares Anne to walk the ridgepole of the roof on Diana’s house, and Anne stubbornly agrees.

The girls try to convince her not to do this, but she climbs a ladder to the roof and steps onto the ridgepole. She takes a few steps and then falls off. The girls scream and run to her, thinking she might be dead. Anne lies on the ground, hurt but conscious. [Mrs. Barry](https://www.gradesaver.com/anne-of-green-gables/study-guide/character-list#mrs-barry) comes outside, and when Anne tries to get to her feet, she finds that her ankle is badly injured. Mr. Barry is enlisted to carry Anne home, and everyone goes with them to Green Gables. When Marilla sees Mr. Barry carrying Anne, she has a sudden realization that “Anne was dearer to her than anything else on earth” (p. 234). As Anne is carried into her home, she faints in Mr. Barry’s arms.

Matthew brings the doctor later in the day, and it is discovered that Anne has broken her ankle. The doctor says that Anne will not be able to go anywhere for seven weeks, so Anne won’t be able to start the school year with the other students. Throughout the seven weeks, Anne’s imagination is her only company during most of the days. However, after school, there are always students and townspeople to keep her company, bring her presents, and tell her gossip. Anne is happy to see how many friends she has, and she is particularly thankful for Diana and [Mrs. Allan](https://www.gradesaver.com/anne-of-green-gables/study-guide/character-list#mrs-allan), who visit her frequently. As August and September pass, Anne becomes all the more eager to return to school and meet the new teacher.

***Critical Study:***

It turns out Anne will have to wait almost two months before she can go back to school. She's had a few mishaps since the "liniment cake episode," but nothing significant. A week after her tea at the manse, it's time for her to get into real trouble.

"Daring was the fashionable amusement" among Avonlea's school-age children. As the chapter title suggests, they take daring seriously and view backing off from a dare as dishonorable. When Diana gives a party for the girls in the class, they soon turn to daring one another. Anne dares nasty Josie Pye to walk along the top of the board fence along one side of the Barrys' garden. To Anne's annoyance, Josie does this with ease. Forgetting she's the one who issued the dare, Anne announces there's nothing wonderful about walking "a little, low, board fence. I knew a girl in Marysville who could walk the ridgepole of a roof." What else can Josie do but dare Anne to do the same thing?

Anne turns pale, but she feels she has no choice. She climbs a ladder to the roof, balances herself on the ridgepole, and takes a few steps. Then, inevitably, she loses her balance and falls off the roof on the other side of the house. After screaming in unison, her friends run around the house to find her lying "all white and limp." Mrs. Barry comes out to see what's the matter, and Anne realizes that she's seriously hurt.

Marilla is in the orchard when she spots the Barrys and Anne's friends coming toward her. Mr. Barry is carrying Anne. At the sight Marilla is stabbed with the realization Anne means everything to her. She recovers her self-possession when Anne explains what has happened, but before she can launch into a lecture, Anne has fainted. The doctor discovers Anne has broken her ankle. She'll need to stay at home for six or seven weeks before she can walk.

The following weeks are dull, but Anne has a flood of visitors—including Sunday School Superintendent Bell. Diana comes daily. Mrs. Allan comes 14 times. Even troublemaker Josie Pye visits. Anne greets Josie politely, thinking if she had been killed, Josie "would have had to carry a dark burden of remorse all her life." So the disaster isn't as disastrous as it might have been. And there's still the new teacher to look forward to.

Clearly Anne's misfortune in this chapter is her own fault. Like many romantically inclined girls, Anne has always wished she could faint dead away; when it actually happens, she realizes fainting isn't fun after all. Yet [Montgomery](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Anne-of-Green-Gables/author/) understands the way children think. Anne is fittingly punished for trying to walk the ridgepole, but there's no way she can back down once Josie has dared her, even though—as Diana points out—it's an unfair dare.

Despite the accident, this chapter has amusing and realistic details. Many children who have tried to imagine their parents as children will understand why Anne has trouble thinking Superintendent Bell was ever a boy. "When I try to imagine him as a boy," says Anne, "I see him with gray whiskers and spectacles, just as he looks in Sunday school, only small."

Sunday school superintendents turn up regularly in 19th-century children's fiction, as does Sunday school. It may surprise readers to learn Sunday school, like everything else, had to be invented. The movement to create Sunday schools began in Great Britain toward the end of the 18th century and was intended to help children who worked in factories on the other six days of the week—factory workers did not get Saturdays off. Reformers might not be able to keep children from having to work—child-labor laws would come later—but at least they could help them learn something on Sundays.

In the United States, the first Sunday schools were held at industrialist Samuel Slater's textile mills in Rhode Island. Sunday school was a popular idea, and by the middle of the 19th century many Protestant churches in Great Britain and North America ran their own Sunday schools. After mandatory state education came into law and children were required to attend school (or at least to try to attend), Sunday school studies became exclusively religious. Children learned Bible texts, hymns, prayers, and catechisms and had a brief chance to socialize as well. As in *Anne of Green Gables*, Sunday school picnics and other get-togethers were cherished events.

Superintendent Bell is an object of fun for Anne, but he's an important person in Avonlea. He recruits volunteers to teach, quizzes students about what they've learned, and gives them new lessons to study. He also reads the opening prayers at the Sunday service each week, thereby earning Anne's scorn. In this chapter, though, his visits to Anne give her a chance to get to know and respect him as an individual.

***Brief Summary:***

At the end of summer, Diana Barry invites all the girls in the Sunday school class to her house for a party. Tired of their usual songs and games, the girls decide to embark on more adventurous activities. They dare each other to hop around the yard on one foot or climb a tree. Josie Pye, a sly girl whom Diana and Anne dislike, dares Anne to walk the ridgepole of the Barry’s kitchen roof. Diana tries to dissuade Anne from performing such a difficult dare, but Anne feels her honor is at stake, so she climbs to the top of the roof. She manages to walk a few steps before losing her balance, falling to the ground, and breaking her ankle. All the girls rush to her side, shrieking and crying.

When Marilla sees Mr. Barry carrying Anne back to Green Gables, she is terrified that something serious has happened. She realizes for the first time how much Anne means to her. Anne rests in bed for seven weeks and is pleased to find that many people in Avonlea care enough about her to visit. From her friends she hears all about the new teacher, Miss Stacy, who dresses beautifully and organizes recitations, nature walks, and physical exercises for her class. Anne thinks her new teacher will be a kindred spirit.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

A week later, [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) gives a small party for the girls in her class. After tea, the girls wander into the garden and begin “daring” each other, a fashionable game in Avonlea in that period. Dares usually involve innocuous things like climbing a tree or hopping around the garden on one foot. [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) dares [Josie Pye](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters), whom she can’t stand, to walk the top of the fence, which Josie handily does. Then Josie dares Anne to walk the ridgepole of the Barrys’ roof. The girls give a gasp of horror as Anne walks toward a ladder. Diana begs her not to accept such a dangerous dare, but Anne says her honor is at stake. If she dies, Diana can have her favorite ring.

***Analysis Part 1:***

One of Anne’s faults is her pride, and as the rivalry with Gilbert has shown, she especially can’t bear being shamed in front of someone she doesn’t like. And her imagination gives her an exaggerated, romantic sense of “honor” that makes her more likely to get into mishaps.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) climbs onto the roof, gains her balance, and begins tentatively walking the ridgepole. She finds that having a good imagination isn’t much help in this scenario. After a few steps, she sways and loses her balance—soon sliding down the side of the roof as the girls scream. Thankfully, she falls on the less steep side of the roof and into a tangle of vines, but she looks very pale. It becomes clear that her ankle is broken, so [Mr. Barry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters) carries her to Green Gables with all the girls trailing behind.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Though Anne’s imagination got her into this situation, she quickly finds that imagination has its limits when she’s faced with a scenario that calls for physical skill. Unfortunately, this is also a situation that involves genuine danger, not imaginary threats.

***Summary Part 3:***

When [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) sees [Mr. Barry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters) approaching with a limp Anne in his arms, she feels such fear that she realizes that [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) is “dearer to her than anything else on earth.” Anne lifts her head and tells Marilla to look on the bright side; she might have broken her neck instead. Then she faints. Later that day, after the doctor’s visit, Anne sadly tells Marilla that she lacked the strength of mind to resist [Josie Pye](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters)’s dare, and that this accident is punishment enough. She’ll have to stay at home for weeks and will miss the new teacher’s start.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Despite Marilla’s gruff exterior and inability to show her love openly, she has developed a deep love for Anne by this time; her fear for Anne makes this clear. Though the incident turns out to be much less of a disaster than it could have been, it’s yet another mishap that teaches Anne about one of her shortcomings—in this case, the folly of misplaced pride.

***Summary Part 4:***[Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley)’s imagination, as well as many visits from school friends, does her good over the next seven weeks. [Mrs. Allan](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-allan) visits her 14 times, and Anne is grateful that she doesn’t moralize about Anne’s accident, unlike [Mrs. Lynde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-rachel-lynde). But Anne can’t wait to return to school. [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry) reports that [Miss Stacy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/miss-muriel-stacy) has the biggest puffed sleeves in Avonlea and often holds classroom recitations or field trips for nature study. [Mrs. Lynde](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-rachel-lynde) thinks such suspicious innovations are what comes of hiring a lady teacher, but Anne is sure that Miss Stacy will prove to be a kindred spirit.

***Analysis Part 4:***

By this time, Anne has developed many good and faithful friends in Avonlea who help her through the weeks of injury and isolation. Even without having met Miss Stacy, Anne suspects that, considering her puffed sleeves and imaginative ideas in the classroom, Miss Stacy is sure to be another such friend.