***Anne of Green Gables***

***Chapter 31***

### ***Where the Brook and River Met***

***Summary:***

After a rich summer free of studying, Anne returns to school with vigor and ambition. She is now fifteen years old, and with the other Avonlea scholars attends Debating Club concerts, parties, sleigh drives, and skating events. Anne is now taller than Marilla, and her eyes have grown serious. Anne does not chatter as she used to, explaining to Marilla that “it’s nicer to think dear, pretty thoughts and keep them in one’s heart.” This change in Anne saddens Marilla, who misses the bright-eyed child she first took in. She bursts into tears at the thought that next year Anne will go to college and leave Green Gables as quiet as it was before her arrival. Miss Stacy remains a central figure in Anne’s education, especially in her training as a writer. Anne becomes critical of her own writing, changing her style from romantic to realistic. All the scholars are nervous about the upcoming entrance exam to Queen’s Academy, and Anne has nightmares about failing.

***Synopsis:***

* Anne gets to spend her summer almost completely outdoors. She considers it her last summer of being a child, and Marilla lets her run free because a doctor told Marilla she's too pale and needs fresh air.
* Anne has a conversation with Marilla about how some people make her want to be good, but Mrs. Lynde's lecturing makes her want to be the opposite. Marilla admits that she feels the same way.
* Anne's Queen's prep class studies for (and worries about) the entrance exams that will determine whether they'll get in to the school.
* Marilla notices how tall Anne has gotten and how grown up she looks. She actually cries to Matthew about how much she'll miss her.
* Marilla asks Anne why she doesn't use big words anymore. Anne says there's so much to learn now that she doesn't have time for big words.

***Significance:***Marilla let Anne avoid studies and spend time outside with Diana all summer because the doctor said that Anne needed open air. When September came, Anne was refreshed and eager to return to her studies. As Anne takes her school books down from the attic, she and Marilla discuss why women can’t be ministers and how Anne tries to be a good person but feels tempted to do whatever [Mrs. Rachel Lynde](https://www.gradesaver.com/anne-of-green-gables/study-guide/character-list#mrs-rachel-lynde) tells her not to do.

School begins and all the students in Anne’s class become immediately preoccupied with whether they will pass the entrance exam to Queen’s. Throughout the school year, Anne studies hard, participates in Debating Club concerts, socializes, grows taller, and becomes quieter. Marilla feels a sense of sorrow over losing the young version of Anne, but Matthew says that Anne will visit often once she goes away to Queen’s. In the spring, Marilla asks Anne about her growing quieter and using shorter words. Anne says that she has begun to enjoy keeping thoughts in her head and that Miss Stacy says short words are stronger. Anne also tells Marilla that the story club disbanded some time ago because everyone needed more time for their studies. With only two months until the entrance exam, Anne wishes she could go outside and enjoy nature, but she focuses on studying instead.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[**Anne**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) savors a glorious, mostly outdoor summer with [**Diana**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry). [**Marilla**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) gladly indulges this—earlier, when [**Minnie May**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters) was sick, the doctor sent Marilla a note warning her to let Anne get as much fresh-air exercise as possible for the sake of her strength and health. When September returns, Anne is delighted to open her books again. She confides in Marilla that she also wants very much to be “good.” She thinks about it often and makes resolutions to improve, especially when she’s with [**Mrs. Allan**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-allan) or [**Miss Stacy**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/miss-muriel-stacy). But when she’s around [**Mrs. Lynde**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-rachel-lynde), her good intentions dissolve. Does that mean she’s bad? Marilla laughs and admits that she often feels the same way around Rachel.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Anne has learned that “being good” is often a matter of influence as much as one’s own best intentions. Though people like Miss Stacy and Mrs. Allan bring out the best in her, sometimes the more outwardly moralizing types of people, such as Mrs. Lynde, cause good intentions to backfire.

***Summary Part 2:***

[**Anne**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) decides she won’t let this trouble her anymore. There are enough things to worry her—always something new, it seems. Growing up is difficult, especially because a person only gets one chance to do it well, but she is glad to have people like [**Marilla**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert), [**Matthew**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/matthew-cuthbert), [**Mrs. Allan**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/mrs-allan), and [**Miss Stacy**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/miss-muriel-stacy) to help her.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Growing up is a challenging process that seems to bring one challenge after another, and it’s best tackled with the loving support of people who bring out the best in a person.

***Summary Part 3:***[**Miss Stacy**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/miss-muriel-stacy) is back at Avonlea school, helping the Queens students prepare for what’s known as “the Entrance” next summer. The exam haunts [**Anne**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley)’s thoughts and dreams, but she enjoys her studies and continued classroom rivalry. [**Marilla**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) even lets Anne go to occasional social outings and parties now.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Anne continues to push for her dream of entering Queen’s, with more and more of her life oriented around her academic ambitions, even while getting to do more of the grown-up kinds of activities she once dreamed of doing.

***Summary Part 4:***[**Anne**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) grows rapidly, giving [**Marilla**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) ambivalent feelings—she loves this growing girl, yet also feels a sense of loss. One winter night, to [**Matthew**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/matthew-cuthbert)’s astonishment, she weeps as she thinks of Anne growing up and going away. She’s noticed that Anne even talks less these days. Anne admits that, more and more, she prefers keeping her nicest thoughts to herself, and she doesn’t feel the need to use big words anymore. Growing up is fun, but not in the way she expected—there’s always so much to learn and think about. The story club doesn’t even meet anymore; [**Miss Stacy**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/miss-muriel-stacy) trains her students to criticize their own compositions, and Anne would rather learn to write well than focus on silly melodramas.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Though she keeps her emotions to herself, Marilla grieves the thought of losing the little girl Anne. For her part, Anne finds herself less impulsive and forthcoming with her thoughts—growing up is surprising in that it involves so much learning, changing, and searching one’s own heart. Even her imagination doesn’t go overboard the way it used to.

***Summary Part 5:***[**Anne**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) tells [**Marilla**](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) that as she anticipates the Entrance, she alternates between hope and fear. She still stumbles over geometry and sometimes has nightmares about failing the whole exam. Marilla says in that case, she can try again next year, but Anne thinks she’d be too heartbroken to try—or to enjoy life at all.

***Analysis Part 5:***

For Anne, the Entrance exam is an all-or-nothing event. She has become a much more focused and ambitious young woman than the talkative, unpredictable little girl who came to Green Gables a few years ago.