***Anne of Green Gables***

***Chapter 8***

### ***Anne’s Bringing-Up Has Begun***

***Summary:***

* Anne makes it through morning chores without Marilla revealing her fate, but finally decides it would be easier to know than wonder, and asks Marilla whether she's decided if she can say.
* When Marilla says yes, Anne's so happy she cries. But Marilla isn't the sentimental type, and tells Anne she cries and laughs too easily.
* Anne asks if she can call her Aunt Marilla. Marilla says no, because she isn't her aunt. Anne asks if they could imagine she is, and Marilla says she doesn't believe in imagining things differently from how they are. Probably the biggest difference between these two characters.
* Marilla starts Anne's education by telling her to memorize The Lord's Prayer. Anne goes to retrieve the prayer but doesn't return.
* Marilla looks for her and finds Anne gazing dreamily at the hallway picture: "Christ Blessing the Little Children." Anne had gotten lost in imagining she was one of them.
* Remember how Marilla doesn't believe in imagining? She's not sympathetic. Back to The Lord's Prayer for Anne.
* But (surprise, surprise) Anne gets sidetracked again and asks Marilla if she might find "a kindred spirit" in Avonlea. Marilla says the neighbor has a girl named Diana, who is Anne's age.
* Anne launches into the stories of her former "friends," both imaginary: Katie Maurice, her reflection that she used to pretend was another girl, and her echo, who she pretended was a friend named Violetta.
* Exhausted, Marilla sends Anne to her room to finish learning the prayer.
* Anne sits in her room and—you guessed it—imagines things instead. But then she thinks about how she is now Anne of Green Gables, and is happy to be "of" somewhere.

***Synopsis:***

The next afternoon, Anne begs Marilla to tell her whether she can stay at Green Gables. Marilla makes Anne wash the dishcloth in hot water before announcing that she can stay. When Anne hears the good news, she cries with happiness, promising to be good and obedient, two qualities she senses Marilla values above all others. Anne asks whether she should continue to refer to Marilla as Miss Cuthbert or whether she might call her Aunt Marilla. Calling Marilla her aunt, says Anne, would be almost as good as having an actual relative. Marilla says Anne should call her Marilla.

Afraid that Anne might repeat the prayer debacle of the previous night, Marilla instructs Anne to retrieve a copy of the Lord’s Prayer from the next room and memorize it. Anne does not return for ten minutes. Marilla finds her kneeling before a picture entitled “Christ Blessing Little Children,” rapt and starry-eyed. Anne is imagining herself as a little girl in the picture whom the other children ignore but who creeps into the crowd hoping for Christ’s attention and blessing. Marilla chastises her for being irreverent, which surprises Anne.

Anne sits at the kitchen table to memorize Lord’s Prayer. She asks Marilla if she will have a “bosom friend” or “kindred spirit” at Avonlea. Marilla says a little girl named Diana Barry lives nearby, and Anne asks about Diana’s hair color, saying red hair in a bosom friend would be unendurable. She tells Marilla about her previous best friends, both imaginary. At Mrs. Thomas’s, she created an imaginary best friend to whom she spoke in the glass door of a bookcase. When she moved to Mrs. Hammond’s, she found a new best friend in the echo of her own voice in a nearby valley. Marilla, fed up with Anne’s chatter, sends her to her room, where she daydreams. She tries to imagine that she is Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald, but finding this persona unconvincing, she appeases herself with her new real name: Anne of Green Gables.

***Analysis (Ch5-8):***

In these chapters, we learn that Anne has had a difficult life. She realizes that her foster mothers did not care for her; they simply wanted a maid and a babysitter. Considering the pain of Anne’s life, her refusal to criticize her foster mothers makes her seem strong and surprisingly optimistic. She also expresses satisfaction in her friends, although they were imaginary. Along with her strength and optimism, Anne possesses a mature ability to use herself as a resource and find happiness in her own company.

Anne is guided not by the rules of social decorum but by her imagination, as Marilla recognizes when she lets Anne make up her own prayer rather than recite “Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep.” For Anne, the reality that society presents can be altered by imagining a different reality. She thinks her own name and life dull, so she renames herself Cordelia and imagines herself a fine lady. She does not have friends, so she makes friends of her reflection and voice. She sees the good in people and places, and then imagines them as even better than they are.

Anne practices her own form of spirituality, which she has developed independently and which consists of a belief that miracles and perfection exist in life. Demoralizing experiences have turned her away from Christian tenets and toward a spiritual life centered on love of the natural world. Marilla cannot understand Anne’s form of spirituality because it diverges from traditional religion. When Marilla asks Anne to pray in a Christian way, Anne begins to forge a mixture of her own spirituality and Marilla’s religion. Anne prays before bed as Marilla’s religion dictates, but she makes up her own flowery, unorthodox prayer. She looks at Marilla’s picture of Christ, but she uses her imagination to insert herself into the scene.

Although Marilla disapproves of Anne’s infractions, she does sympathize with Anne and begins to temper her sternness with sympathy. Although she insists that Anne call her Marilla instead of using the more affectionate name Aunt Marilla, she exhibits compassion for Anne, pitying her plight at the hands of cruel foster mothers, and refusing to hand her over to the unpleasant Mrs. Blewett. She does not even criticize Anne for her unorthodox prayer; although she comes down hard on Anne’s improper behavior, she understands that Anne acts oddly not because of perversity or rebelliousness, but because she has never been taught differently. She seems to know that Anne has a good heart and wants to do the right thing.

***Critical Study(Ch1-8):***

The next day, Marilla keeps Anne busy with tasks all morning. After lunch, Anne begs Marilla to tell her whether she will get to stay at Green Gables. Marilla tells Anne that she can stay, and Anne begins to cry tears of joy. Anne would like to start calling her new guardian Aunt Marilla, but she is told to just call her Marilla, as everyone else in Avonlea does. Anne says that they could imagine that Marilla is her aunt, and Marilla says that she never imagines things.

Marilla sends Anne off to learn the Lord’s Prayer, but Anne gets sidetracked on the way, as she often does. Marilla soon finds that Anne has been distracted by a picture of “Christ Blessing Little Children” (p. 72). Anne imagines herself as one of the children in the picture and says that she wishes the artist had not painted Christ looking sorrowful. Marilla again tells Anne to work on learning the Lord’s Prayer, and Anne sets about doing it. Anne breaks her silent study after a few minutes to wonder aloud if she will have any “bosom friends” (p. 74) in Avonlea. Marilla responds that [Diana Barry](https://www.gradesaver.com/anne-of-green-gables/study-guide/character-list#diana-barry) is visiting her aunt but will be back home soon. Anne is excited about meeting Diana, especially because Marilla says that she is pretty. Anne tells Marilla about some imaginary friends she used to have when she lived with Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Hammond.

Marilla sends Anne to her room to continue learning the Lord’s Prayer without distractions. When Anne gets upstairs, she finishes learning the prayer and decides to imagine decorations into the room since it is so bare. She also imagines herself looking more beautiful. She looks out the window and falls into daydreams.

L. M. Montgomery makes an interesting and impactful choice by starting [Anne of Green Gables](https://www.gradesaver.com/anne-of-green-gables) with a chapter from the perspective of Mrs. Rachel Lynde. Mrs. Rachel Lynde is a supporting character throughout the novel, but most of the chapters follow the actions of Anne, Marilla, and Matthew. Montgomery's choice to start with a chapter about Mrs. Rachel Lynde acclimates the reader to the culture of Avonlea, particularly the fact that things that are out of the norm will quickly be noticed and gossiped about. This is important for the reader to have in mind when Anne arrives in Avonlea a few chapters later because Anne is sensitive about feeling different from others and wants more than anything to feel accepted.

Marilla and Mrs. Rachel Lynde display a variety of prejudices when discussing Marilla and Matthew's decision to take in an orphan boy. Mrs. Rachel Lynde feels that taking in an orphan is a bad idea and tells multiple stories about orphans causing havoc in their adopted families' homes. Those who end up as orphans are likely those from lower-income backgrounds since their parents may not be able to afford consistent health care or work dangerous jobs. Therefore, the reader may infer that Mrs. Rachel Lynde believes lower-income people are more likely to cause problems in a community. Marilla also shows prejudice against those from other countries, a practice known as xenophobia. Marilla says, "There's never anybody to be had but those stupid, half-grown little French boys...no London street Arabs for me...Give me a native born at least...I'll feel easier in my mind and sleep sounder at nights if we get a born Canadian" (p. 10). It is likely that Marilla holds these views due to the fact that she has seldom traveled outside of Avonlea and may find the customs of foreigners unfamiliar.

Montgomery causes readers to feel sympathy for Anne through dramatic irony as Anne and Matthew travel from the train station to Green Gables. The reader knows that Marilla and Matthew wanted an orphan boy to help Matthew on the farm, and Matthew thinks to himself that they will have to send her back to the orphanage. However, Anne does not know this and speaks with happiness and awe, telling Matthew, "I've never had a real home since I can remember. It gives me that pleasant ache again just to think of coming to a really truly home" (p. 26). Experiencing this irony makes the moment when Anne finds out she will be able to stay at Green Gables all the more impactful for the reader.

From the beginning of her time in Avonlea, Anne is very self-conscious of her appearance making her different, which she sees as a negative thing. Anne asks Marilla whether they would want to keep her at Green Gables if she were beautiful and had brown hair, and she later tells Marilla that she doesn't pray to God because she thinks he gave her red hair on purpose. Since red hair is the rarest hair color, Anne has likely felt that she is different from everyone throughout her life. Having this difference on top of the neglect she faced due to being an orphan created a desire to try to fit in as much as possible. However, though Anne wants to fit in so that she will be accepted, it is actually her differences that make so many people in Avonlea love her.

Anne has developed many defense mechanisms due to her traumatic and tumultuous childhood. Anne's main defense mechanism is using her imagination to distract her from sad situations. This serves her well much of the time, but sometimes it seems as if she were almost dissociating from reality, such as when the narrator says, "Anne became more and more abstracted, eating mechanically, with her big eyes fixed unswervingly and unseeingly on the sky outside the window" (p.44). Anne also elects not to experience certain things so that she will not have to go through the pain of missing them. As she explains, "There is no use in loving things if you have to be torn from them, is there?" (p. 46.) These defense mechanisms help Anne stay resilient through hard times, but as she settles into Green Gables and matures over the following years, she must learn to trust that she will not be abandoned again.

***Critical Analysis:***

For most of the following day Marilla doesn't tell Anne whether she'll be allowed to stay at Green Gables. When Anne finally begs to learn her fate, Marilla is "unable to find any excuse for deferring her explanation longer." Yes, she says, Anne can stay as long as she behaves herself. Anne sheds happy tears, and the two sort out a few details. Since the village school is about to close for summer vacation, Anne will start there in the fall. Marilla wants to be called just "Marilla," with no other title.

Marilla then announces Anne needs to memorize the Lord's Prayer. Anne heads to the sitting room in search of a copy. Ten minutes later Marilla finds her still there, gazing at a picture called "Christ Blessing Little Children." Anne points to a little girl standing shyly in the background and says, "She was afraid He mightn't notice her. But it's likely He did, don't you think?" She adds most artists make Jesus look sad, though she's sure when he was with children he must have looked happier.

Marilla is scandalized by Anne's well-meaning comment but falls back on reproving Anne for dallying and daydreaming. Anne obediently settles down in the kitchen, occasionally interrupting her studies with questions for Marilla. She's thrilled to learn a potential "bosom friend" lives nearby: [Diana Barry](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Anne-of-Green-Gables/character-analysis/#Diana_Barry), who's away on a trip but will be returning soon. Anne informs her the only best friends she's had before were imaginary girls named Katie Maurice and Violetta.

At this Marilla dryly points out Diana Barry's mother might not enjoy hearing about an imagination *this* well developed. She sends Anne up to her room to finish memorizing the prayer. Anne finishes quickly and sits back to dream up a beautiful room to replace her plain one. But she quickly reminds herself it's much nicer to be Anne of Green Gables than an imaginary maiden, even one with hair "of midnight darkness."

Although Marilla is honestly troubled by what she sees as Anne's lack of religious orthodoxy, this chapter makes it clear while Anne may be "unchurched," she's far from irreligious. In fact her lively take on Christian faith shows in this chapter as fresh, creative, and heartfelt. For Marilla, Anne's primary task is to memorize Christian doctrine; for Anne it is to understand what she's memorizing.

She appreciates the Lord's Prayer for its beauty because "it makes me feel just the same way poetry does." She's deeply moved by the print of Jesus and the children, which she studies for 10 minutes. By calling the print "a rather vivid chromo [lithograph]," the narrator makes it clear the image is noteworthy only for being colorful. But Anne is as moved by it as if it were a priceless work of art. She conjures up a tender story about a neglected girl at the edge of the picture—a story that makes Marilla uncomfortable. "It doesn't sound right to talk so familiarly about such things," says Marilla, missing the point that Anne has drawn true religious inspiration from the picture. That print may have been on the sitting room wall for decades, but Anne is the first person who has really looked at it.

Nevertheless an 11-year-old who stares at a religious painting for 10 minutes cannot be called ordinary, and Marilla is right to warn Anne to keep her imagination in check when [Diana Barry](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Anne-of-Green-Gables/character-analysis/#Diana_Barry)'s mother is around. When Anne asks if Diana might become a "bosom friend," Marilla replies guardedly that Diana is a very nice little girl, and "perhaps she will be a playmate for you." Perhaps Marilla reveals her limitations when she refuses to encourage Anne's fancies, but she's a realist who doesn't want Anne to come across as silly or pretentious when she meets new people. It's her way of looking out for her new charge.

Anne's imaginary bedroom makeover shows she's a reader. She could never have picked up phrases like *reclining gracefully* and *clear ivory pallor* from the Hammonds or Thomases! Her description also makes it clear the books she likes are romantic ones, full of regal young women "clad" in white lace gowns. Later an adult friend of Anne's will wean her from that kind of writing.

It is abundantly clear Anne hates having red hair. This is the second time she's expressed a wish for hair "of midnight darkness." Her yearning for black hair will cause her some heartache later in the book.

***Significance:***

Marilla forestalls telling Anne that she is to stay at Green Gables until the following afternoon. Anne, smart and mindful but adrift in her daydreams until grounded by rebuke or calamity, is at her wits end to know her fate. The girl's prayers are answered and she succumbs to tears, unable to contain herself. Anne promises to be good, even though it will be "uphill work" owing to the fact that she is "desperately wicked," or so Mrs. Thomas told her. Despite Anne's entreaties to call her new guardian Aunt, Marilla will have none of it; after all, she is not the girl's aunt. Anne wishes that Marilla could imagine she were her aunt, just as Anne herself imagined her reflection in Mrs. Thomas's bookcase and her very own echo as her dear and intimate friends. Learning The Lord's Prayer for Marilla's sake, Anne wonders aloud if she will ever have a bosom friend, "a really kindred spirit to whom I can confide my inmost soul." Fortuitously, a girl just about Anne's age lives across the way at Orchard Slope. Diana Barry is "good and smart, which is better than being pretty," Marilla tells Anne, who is enthralled by the hope of a bosom friend. Marilla sends the orphan girl to her room to finish learning the prayer that, despite her chatter, she has by now well-learned. Instead, seated in a chair by the window of the east gable, Anne luxuriates in the freedom to imagine, her surroundings becoming regal and her hair of "midnight darkness." While Marilla cannot stretch her imagination so far as to think herself to be Aunt Marilla to the orphan girl, Anne can imagine herself to be Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald. Despite it all, it is her own reflection she finds in the looking glass. "However, it's a million times nicer to be Anne of Green Gables than Anne of nowhere in particular, isn't it?" she reasons.

Anne Shirley has consoled herself for years with dreams. And now she is nearly living a dream, one occupied by a place to call home, a proper education and the prospect of a bosom buddy. Anne's yearning, and her flights of fantasy to satisfy those yearnings, clash with Marilla's sense of propriety and wish to give the girl a proper upbringing. In return for that upbringing Anne need only strive to be a good girl and grateful. Anne seems content now not to find Lady Cordelia in her looking glass, but Anne of Green Gables, which is a million times better than Anne of nowhere in particular.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The next day, [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) keeps [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) busy with household tasks and observes that she’s hardworking and a fast learner—her weakness is her tendency to drift into daydreams and forget what she’s doing. After Anne washes the dinner dishes, Marilla finally breaks the news: she and [Matthew](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/matthew-cuthbert) have decided to keep her, as long as tries to be good. Anne immediately bursts into tears of joy. Marilla tells Anne to sit down and try to calm herself—she laughs and cries too easily.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Marilla doesn’t waste any time getting Anne used to the role that will be expected of her at Green Gables. Though she’s not being asked to “earn her keep” like Mrs. Blewett wanted, she will have to contribute to the upkeep of her new home, and to “be good,” an expectation Anne takes seriously as she grows up. Marilla is uncomfortable with Anne’s easily moved emotions and tries to tamp them down.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) says that [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) must simply call her “Marilla”—she doesn’t want to be called “Miss Cuthbert,” because she’s not used to it, or “Aunt Marilla,” because she’s not Anne’s aunt and won’t pretend she is. Anne is shocked that Marilla never imagines. Marilla says she doesn’t believe in imagining that things are different from the way God has made them. She sends Anne into the sitting room to find the copy of the Lord’s Prayer on the mantel; she must memorize it this afternoon.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Imagination has been key to Anne’s survival as a lonely orphan, but Marilla cannot understand this; to her, trying to imaginatively improve on life is suspect at best, ungrateful at worst. Because imagination is Anne’s way of coping with hardship, this suggests that Marilla simply hasn’t needed her imagination to the degree Anne has.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) doesn’t reappear, and when [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) goes to investigate, she finds Anne staring at a picture on the wall, Christ Blessing the Little Children. Anne tells Marilla she was imagining that she was one of the children in the picture—the lonely-looking little girl standing apart from the group, hoping that Christ will notice her. She imagines how the little girl must have felt while she waited in trepidation, and the joy she must have felt when she was kindly noticed.

***Analysis Part 3:***

This scene is an example of Anne and Marilla’s different views on imagination. Marilla wants Anne to memorize The Lord’s Prayer, seeing this as sufficient religious instruction for now. For Anne, though, imagining herself into a biblical scene is just as effective, and perhaps even more, for learning about Christ.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) interrupts [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley)’s digression, finding it unseemly, and tells her that when she’s asked to do something, she needs to obey immediately. Anne finally settles down to study the prayer. She interrupts her study to say that she finds the prayer beautiful; in the asylum Sunday School, the superintendent prayed “mournfully,” as if it were a “disagreeable duty.” But this prayer sounds like poetry.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Marilla feels that Anne’s imaginative approach to a biblical story might be sacrilegious. But for Anne, imagination and “poetry” deepen her appreciation of religion, making it easier for her to relate to. Since much of Anne’s life has been taken up with “disagreeable duty,” it’s not surprising that this would be an unappealing view of religion.

***Summary part 5:***

After another period of silence, [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) asks [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert) if she thinks that Anne will ever have a “bosom friend” in Avonlea. By this she means an “intimate friend” or “kindred spirit” in whom she can confide anything. Marilla mentions that [Diana Barry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry), who lives at Orchard Slope, the neighboring farm, might be a good playmate. She also assures Anne, who’s worried that Diana might also have [red hair](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/symbols/red-hair), that Diana has black hair and, more importantly, she is smart and well-behaved.

***Analysis Part 5:***

“Bosom friend” and “kindred spirit” are somewhat interchangeable terms that Anne uses for close, heartfelt friendships—something Anne has never had before. Marilla tries to redirect Anne from her preoccupation with the “tragedy” of red hair; it’s what’s inside that counts, though Anne finds this hard to believe.

***Summary part 6:***

[Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) disregards [Marilla](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/marilla-cuthbert)’s attempt to teach a moral and says that having a beautiful bosom friend would be almost as good as being beautiful oneself. When she lived with [Mrs. Thomas](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters), she named her reflection in the bookcase “Katie Maurice” and talked to Katie about her life, imagining that someday she could step through the enchanted bookcase and join Katie in a happy land forever. When Anne moved in with [Mrs. Hammond](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters), she discovered an echo in the valley and named her Violetta, becoming nearly as attached to her as to Katie Maurice. Marilla dryly observes that it will be good for Anne to have a real friend and sends her upstairs to finish learning the prayer.

***Analysis part 6:***

Because of her troubled childhood, Anne’s only friends in life have been imaginary—just her own reflection and the echo of her voice. (Lucy Maud Montgomery, herself a lonely child, had an imaginary friend named Katie Maurice.) She longs for a real, tangible friendship that isn’t a mere extension of herself.

***Summary part 7:***

Up in her room, [Anne](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/anne-shirley) imagines different décor and furnishings for the spartan bedroom—velvet carpet, silk curtains, and gold and silver tapestries. She also imagines that she’s wearing a white lace gown, has black hair, and is named Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald. But then she catches a glimpse of her reflection and reminds herself that she’s just “Anne of Green Gables”—which is so much nicer than being Anne of nowhere in particular. Then she sits at the window and blows kisses to the Snow Queen, the trees, [Diana](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/anne-of-green-gables/characters/diana-barry)’s house, and even Katie Maurice and Violetta.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Anne still tends to disappear into elaborate daydreams, transforming her surroundings and her own identity to suit her imaginings. Yet, as she feels more at home at Green Gables, she starts to feel less of a need to do this—her real surroundings and identity begin to feel like enough. But that doesn’t mean she has to let go of her imagination entirely.