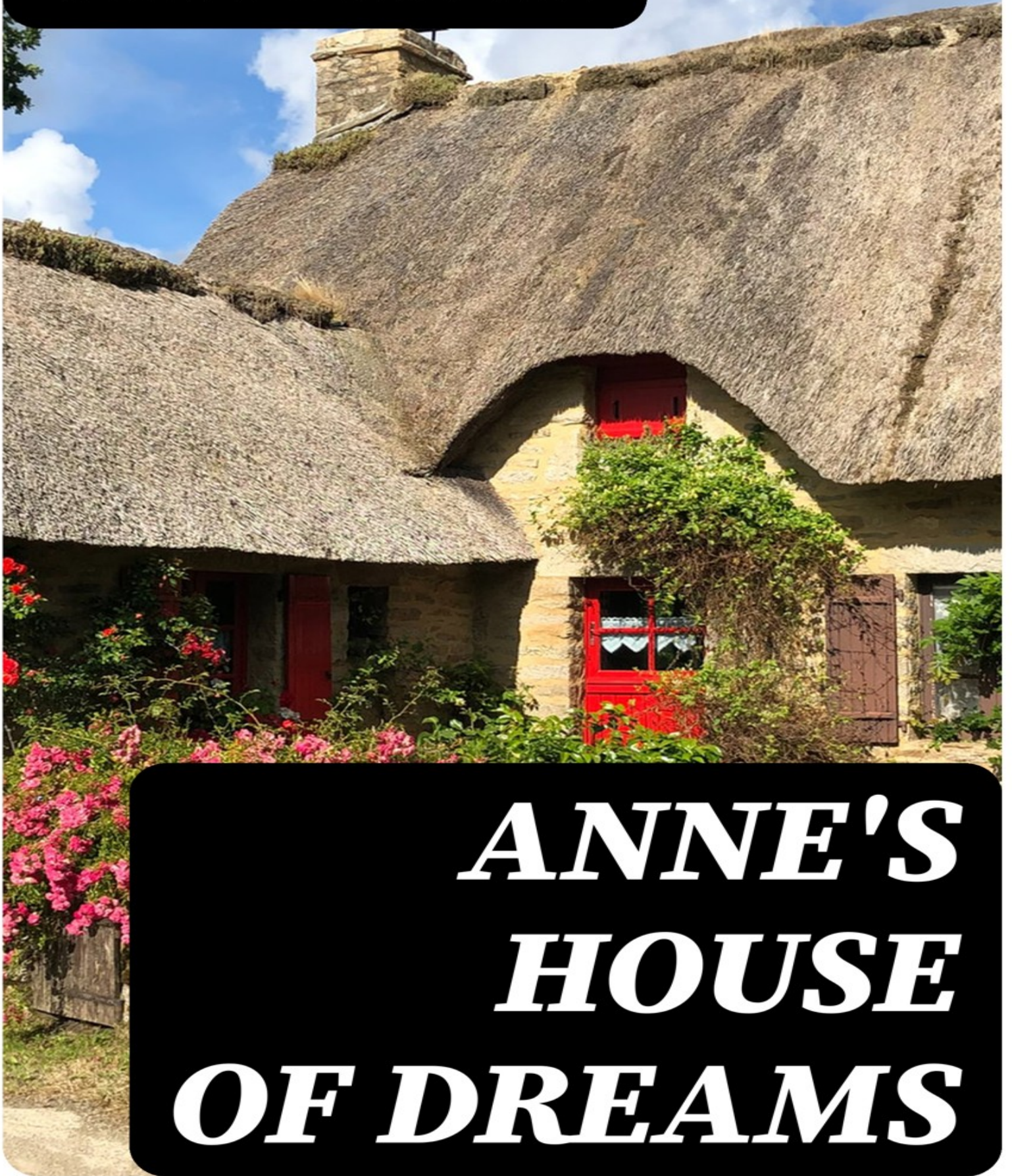


***LUCY MAUD
MONTGOMERY***



***ANNE'S
HOUSE
OF DREAMS***

Lucy Maud Montgomery

Anne's House of Dreams

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I. In the Garret of Green Gables

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“Thanks be, I’m done with geometry, learning or teaching it,” said Anne Shirley, a trifle vindictively, as she thumped a somewhat battered volume of Euclid into a big chest of books, banged the lid in triumph, and sat down upon it, looking at Diana Wright across the Green Gables garret, with gray eyes that were like a morning sky.

The garret was a shadowy, suggestive, delightful place, as all garrets should be. Through the open window, by which Anne sat, blew the sweet, scented, sunwarm air of the August afternoon; outside, poplar boughs rustled and tossed in the wind; beyond them were the woods, where Lover’s Lane wound its enchanted path, and the old apple orchard which still bore its rosy harvests munificently. And, over all, was a great mountain range of snowy clouds in the blue southern sky. Through the other window was glimpsed a distant, white-capped, blue sea — the beautiful St. Lawrence Gulf, on which floats, like a jewel, Abegweit, whose softer, sweeter Indian name has long been forsaken for the more prosaic one of Prince Edward Island.

Diana Wright, three years older than when we last saw her, had grown somewhat matronly in the intervening time. But her eyes were as black and brilliant, her cheeks as rosy, and her dimples as enchanting, as in the long-ago days when she and Anne Shirley had vowed eternal friendship in the garden at Orchard Slope. In her arms she held a small, sleeping, black-curled creature, who for two happy years had been known to the world of Avonlea as “Small Anne

Cordelia." Avonlea folks knew why Diana had called her Anne, of course, but Avonlea folks were puzzled by the Cordelia. There had never been a Cordelia in the Wright or Barry connections. Mrs. Harmon Andrews said she supposed Diana had found the name in some trashy novel, and wondered that Fred hadn't more sense than to allow it. But Diana and Anne smiled at each other. They knew how Small Anne Cordelia had come by her name.

"You always hated geometry," said Diana with a retrospective smile. "I should think you'd be real glad to be through with teaching, anyhow."

"Oh, I've always liked teaching, apart from geometry. These past three years in Summerside have been very pleasant ones. Mrs. Harmon Andrews told me when I came home that I wouldn't likely find married life as much better than teaching as I expected. Evidently Mrs. Harmon is of Hamlet's opinion that it may be better to bear the ills that we have than fly to others that we know not of."

Anne's laugh, as blithe and irresistible as of yore, with an added note of sweetness and maturity, rang through the garret. Marilla in the kitchen below, compounding blue plum preserve, heard it and smiled; then sighed to think how seldom that dear laugh would echo through Green Gables in the years to come. Nothing in her life had ever given Marilla so much happiness as the knowledge that Anne was going to marry Gilbert Blythe; but every joy must bring with it its little shadow of sorrow. During the three Summerside years Anne had been home often for vacations and weekends; but, after this, a bi-annual visit would be as much as could be hoped for.

"You needn't let what Mrs. Harmon says worry you," said Diana, with the calm assurance of the four-years matron.

"Married life has its ups and downs, of course. You mustn't

expect that everything will always go smoothly. But I can assure you, Anne, that it's a happy life, when you're married to the right man."

Anne smothered a smile. Diana's airs of vast experience always amused her a little.

"I daresay I'll be putting them on too, when I've been married four years," she thought. "Surely my sense of humor will preserve me from it, though."

"Is it settled yet where you are going to live?" asked Diana, cuddling Small Anne Cordelia with the inimitable gesture of motherhood which always sent through Anne's heart, filled with sweet, unuttered dreams and hopes, a thrill that was half pure pleasure and half a strange, ethereal pain.

"Yes. That was what I wanted to tell you when I 'phoned to you to come down today. By the way, I can't realize that we really have telephones in Avonlea now. It sounds so preposterously up-to-date and modernish for this darling, leisurely old place."

"We can thank the A. V. I. S. for them," said Diana. "We should never have got the line if they hadn't taken the matter up and carried it through. There was enough cold water thrown to discourage any society. But they stuck to it, nevertheless. You did a splendid thing for Avonlea when you founded that society, Anne. What fun we did have at our meetings! Will you ever forget the blue hall and Judson Parker's scheme for painting medicine advertisements on his fence?"

"I don't know that I'm wholly grateful to the A. V. I. S. in the matter of the telephone," said Anne. "Oh, I know it's most convenient — even more so than our old device of signalling to each other by flashes of candlelight! And, as Mrs. Rachel says, 'Avonlea must keep up with the

procession, that's what.' But somehow I feel as if I didn't want Avonlea spoiled by what Mr. Harrison, when he wants to be witty, calls 'modern inconveniences.' I should like to have it kept always just as it was in the dear old years. That's foolish — and sentimental — and impossible. So I shall immediately become wise and practical and possible. The telephone, as Mr. Harrison concedes, is 'a buster of a good thing' — even if you do know that probably half a dozen interested people are listening along the line."

"That's the worst of it," sighed Diana. "It's so annoying to hear the receivers going down whenever you ring anyone up. They say Mrs. Harmon Andrews insisted that their 'phone should be put in their kitchen just so that she could listen whenever it rang and keep an eye on the dinner at the same time. Today, when you called me, I distinctly heard that queer clock of the Pyes' striking. So no doubt Josie or Gertie was listening."

"Oh, so that is why you said, 'You've got a new clock at Green Gables, haven't you?' I couldn't imagine what you meant. I heard a vicious click as soon as you had spoken. I suppose it was the Pye receiver being hung up with profane energy. Well, never mind the Pyes. As Mrs. Rachel says, 'Pyes they always were and Pyes they always will be, world without end, amen.' I want to talk of pleasanter things. It's all settled as to where my new home shall be."

"Oh, Anne, where? I do hope it's near here."

"No-o-o, that's the drawback. Gilbert is going to settle at Four Winds Harbor — sixty miles from here."

"Sixty! It might as well be six hundred," sighed Diana. "I never can get further from home now than Charlottetown."

"You'll have to come to Four Winds. It's the most beautiful harbor on the Island. There's a little village called Glen St. Mary at its head, and Dr. David Blythe has been

practicing there for fifty years. He is Gilbert's great-uncle, you know. He is going to retire, and Gilbert is to take over his practice. Dr. Blythe is going to keep his house, though, so we shall have to find a habitation for ourselves. I don't know yet what it is, or where it will be in reality, but I have a little house o'dreams all furnished in my imagination — a tiny, delightful castle in Spain."

"Where are you going for your wedding tour?" asked Diana.

"Nowhere. Don't look horrified, Diana dearest. You suggest Mrs. Harmon Andrews. She, no doubt, will remark condescendingly that people who can't afford wedding 'towers' are real sensible not to take them; and then she'll remind me that Jane went to Europe for hers. I want to spend MY honeymoon at Four Winds in my own dear house of dreams."

"And you've decided not to have any bridesmaid?"

"There isn't any one to have. You and Phil and Priscilla and Jane all stole a march on me in the matter of marriage; and Stella is teaching in Vancouver. I have no other 'kindred soul' and I won't have a bridesmaid who isn't."

"But you are going to wear a veil, aren't you?" asked Diana, anxiously.

"Yes, indeedy. I shouldn't feel like a bride without one. I remember telling Matthew, that evening when he brought me to Green Gables, that I never expected to be a bride because I was so homely no one would ever want to marry me — unless some foreign missionary did. I had an idea then that foreign missionaries couldn't afford to be finicky in the matter of looks if they wanted a girl to risk her life among cannibals. You should have seen the foreign missionary Priscilla married. He was as handsome and inscrutable as those daydreams we once planned to marry

ourselves, Diana; he was the best dressed man I ever met, and he raved over Priscilla's 'ethereal, golden beauty.' But of course there are no cannibals in Japan."

"Your wedding dress is a dream, anyhow," sighed Diana rapturously. "You'll look like a perfect queen in it — you're so tall and slender. How DO you keep so slim, Anne? I'm fatter than ever — I'll soon have no waist at all."

"Stoutness and slimness seem to be matters of predestination," said Anne. "At all events, Mrs. Harmon Andrews can't say to you what she said to me when I came home from Summerside, 'Well, Anne, you're just about as skinny as ever.' It sounds quite romantic to be 'slender,' but 'skinny' has a very different tang."

"Mrs. Harmon has been talking about your trousseau. She admits it's as nice as Jane's, although she says Jane married a millionaire and you are only marrying a 'poor young doctor without a cent to his name.'"

Anne laughed.

"My dresses ARE nice. I love pretty things. I remember the first pretty dress I ever had — the brown gloria Matthew gave me for our school concert. Before that everything I had was so ugly. It seemed to me that I stepped into a new world that night."

"That was the night Gilbert recited 'Bingen on the Rhine,' and looked at you when he said, 'There's another, NOT a sister.' And you were so furious because he put your pink tissue rose in his breast pocket! You didn't much imagine then that you would ever marry him."

"Oh, well, that's another instance of predestination," laughed Anne, as they went down the garret stairs.

II. The House of Dreams

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There was more excitement in the air of Green Gables than there had ever been before in all its history. Even Marilla was so excited that she couldn't help showing it — which was little short of being phenomenal.

“There's never been a wedding in this house,” she said, half apologetically, to Mrs. Rachel Lynde. “When I was a child I heard an old minister say that a house was not a real home until it had been consecrated by a birth, a wedding and a death. We've had deaths here — my father and mother died here as well as Matthew; and we've even had a birth here. Long ago, just after we moved into this house, we had a married hired man for a little while, and his wife had a baby here. But there's never been a wedding before. It does seem so strange to think of Anne being married. In a way she just seems to me the little girl Matthew brought home here fourteen years ago. I can't realize that she's grown up. I shall never forget what I felt when I saw Matthew bringing in a GIRL. I wonder what became of the boy we would have got if there hadn't been a mistake. I wonder what HIS fate was.”

“Well, it was a fortunate mistake,” said Mrs. Rachel Lynde, “though, mind you, there was a time I didn't think so — that evening I came up to see Anne and she treated us to such a scene. Many things have changed since then, that's what.”

Mrs. Rachel sighed, and then brisked up again. When weddings were in order Mrs. Rachel was ready to let the dead past bury its dead.

“I’m going to give Anne two of my cotton warp spreads,” she resumed. “A tobacco-stripe one and an apple-leaf one. She tells me they’re getting to be real fashionable again. Well, fashion or no fashion, I don’t believe there’s anything prettier for a spare-room bed than a nice apple-leaf spread, that’s what. I must see about getting them bleached. I’ve had them sewed up in cotton bags ever since Thomas died, and no doubt they’re an awful color. But there’s a month yet, and dew-bleaching will work wonders.”

Only a month! Marilla sighed and then said proudly:

“I’m giving Anne that half dozen braided rugs I have in the garret. I never supposed she’d want them — they’re so old-fashioned, and nobody seems to want anything but hooked mats now. But she asked me for them — said she’d rather have them than anything else for her floors. They ARE pretty. I made them of the nicest rags, and braided them in stripes. It was such company these last few winters. And I’ll make her enough blue plum preserve to stock her jam closet for a year. It seems real strange. Those blue plum trees hadn’t even a blossom for three years, and I thought they might as well be cut down. And this last spring they were white, and such a crop of plums I never remember at Green Gables.”

“Well, thank goodness that Anne and Gilbert really are going to be married after all. It’s what I’ve always prayed for,” said Mrs. Rachel, in the tone of one who is comfortably sure that her prayers have availed much. “It was a great relief to find out that she really didn’t mean to take the Kingsport man. He was rich, to be sure, and Gilbert is poor — at least, to begin with; but then he’s an Island boy.”

“He’s Gilbert Blythe,” said Marilla contentedly. Marilla would have died the death before she would have put into words the thought that was always in the background of her

mind whenever she had looked at Gilbert from his childhood up — the thought that, had it not been for her own wilful pride long, long ago, he might have been HER son. Marilla felt that, in some strange way, his marriage with Anne would put right that old mistake. Good had come out of the evil of the ancient bitterness.

As for Anne herself, she was so happy that she almost felt frightened. The gods, so says the old superstition, do not like to behold too happy mortals. It is certain, at least, that some human beings do not. Two of that ilk descended upon Anne one violet dusk and proceeded to do what in them lay to prick the rainbow bubble of her satisfaction. If she thought she was getting any particular prize in young Dr. Blythe, or if she imagined that he was still as infatuated with her as he might have been in his salad days, it was surely their duty to put the matter before her in another light. Yet these two worthy ladies were not enemies of Anne; on the contrary, they were really quite fond of her, and would have defended her as their own young had anyone else attacked her. Human nature is not obliged to be consistent.

Mrs. Inglis — nee Jane Andrews, to quote from the Daily Enterprise — came with her mother and Mrs. Jasper Bell. But in Jane the milk of human kindness had not been curdled by years of matrimonial bickerings. Her lines had fallen in pleasant places. In spite of the fact — as Mrs. Rachel Lynde would say — that she had married a millionaire, her marriage had been happy. Wealth had not spoiled her. She was still the placid, amiable, pink-cheeked Jane of the old quartette, sympathising with her old chum's happiness and as keenly interested in all the dainty details of Anne's trousseau as if it could rival her own silken and jewelled splendors. Jane was not brilliant, and had probably never

made a remark worth listening to in her life; but she never said anything that would hurt anyone's feelings — which may be a negative talent but is likewise a rare and enviable one.

“So Gilbert didn't go back on you after all,” said Mrs. Harmon Andrews, contriving to convey an expression of surprise in her tone. “Well, the Blythes generally keep their word when they've once passed it, no matter what happens. Let me see — you're twenty-five, aren't you, Anne? When I was a girl twenty-five was the first corner. But you look quite young. Redheaded people always do.”

“Red hair is very fashionable now,” said Anne, trying to smile, but speaking rather coldly. Life had developed in her a sense of humor which helped her over many difficulties; but as yet nothing had availed to steel her against a reference to her hair.

“So it is — so it is,” conceded Mrs. Harmon. “There's no telling what queer freaks fashion will take. Well, Anne, your things are very pretty, and very suitable to your position in life, aren't they, Jane? I hope you'll be very happy. You have my best wishes, I'm sure. A long engagement doesn't often turn out well. But, of course, in your case it couldn't be helped.”

“Gilbert looks very young for a doctor. I'm afraid people won't have much confidence in him,” said Mrs. Jasper Bell gloomily. Then she shut her mouth tightly, as if she had said what she considered it her duty to say and held her conscience clear. She belonged to the type which always has a stringy black feather in its hat and straggling locks of hair on its neck.

Anne's surface pleasure in her pretty bridal things was temporarily shadowed; but the deeps of happiness below could not thus be disturbed; and the little stings of

Mesdames Bell and Andrews were forgotten when Gilbert came later, and they wandered down to the birches of the brook, which had been saplings when Anne had come to Green Gables, but were now tall, ivory columns in a fairy palace of twilight and stars. In their shadows Anne and Gilbert talked in lover-fashion of their new home and their new life together.

“I’ve found a nest for us, Anne.”

“Oh, where? Not right in the village, I hope. I wouldn’t like that altogether.”

“No. There was no house to be had in the village. This is a little white house on the harbor shore, half way between Glen St. Mary and Four Winds Point. It’s a little out of the way, but when we get a ‘phone in that won’t matter so much. The situation is beautiful. It looks to the sunset and has the great blue harbor before it. The sand-dunes aren’t very far away — the sea winds blow over them and the sea spray drenches them.”

“But the house itself, Gilbert, — OUR first home? What is it like?”

“Not very large, but large enough for us. There’s a splendid living room with a fireplace in it downstairs, and a dining room that looks out on the harbor, and a little room that will do for my office. It is about sixty years old — the oldest house in Four Winds. But it has been kept in pretty good repair, and was all done over about fifteen years ago — shingled, plastered and re-floored. It was well built to begin with. I understand that there was some romantic story connected with its building, but the man I rented it from didn’t know it.”

“He said Captain Jim was the only one who could spin that old yarn now.”

“Who is Captain Jim?”

“The keeper of the lighthouse on Four Winds Point. You’ll love that Four Winds light, Anne. It’s a revolving one, and it flashes like a magnificent star through the twilights. We can see it from our living room windows and our front door.”

“Who owns the house?”

“Well, it’s the property of the Glen St. Mary Presbyterian Church now, and I rented it from the trustees. But it belonged until lately to a very old lady, Miss Elizabeth Russell. She died last spring, and as she had no near relatives she left her property to the Glen St. Mary Church. Her furniture is still in the house, and I bought most of it — for a mere song you might say, because it was all so old-fashioned that the trustees despaired of selling it. Glen St. Mary folks prefer plush brocade and sideboards with mirrors and ornamentations, I fancy. But Miss Russell’s furniture is very good and I feel sure you’ll like it, Anne.”

“So far, good,” said Anne, nodding cautious approval. “But, Gilbert, people cannot live by furniture alone. You haven’t yet mentioned one very important thing. Are there TREES about this house?”

“Heaps of them, oh, dryad! There is a big grove of fir trees behind it, two rows of Lombardy poplars down the lane, and a ring of white birches around a very delightful garden. Our front door opens right into the garden, but there is another entrance — a little gate hung between two firs. The hinges are on one trunk and the catch on the other. Their boughs form an arch overhead.”

“Oh, I’m so glad! I couldn’t live where there were no trees — something vital in me would starve. Well, after that, there’s no use asking you if there’s a brook anywhere near. THAT would be expecting too much.”

“But there IS a brook — and it actually cuts across one corner of the garden.”

“Then,” said Anne, with a long sigh of supreme satisfaction, “this house you have found IS my house of dreams and none other.”

III. The Land of Dreams Among

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“Have you made up your mind who you’re going to have to the wedding, Anne?” asked Mrs. Rachel Lynde, as she hemstitched table napkins industriously. “It’s time your invitations were sent, even if they are to be only informal ones.”

“I don’t mean to have very many,” said Anne. “We just want those we love best to see us married. Gilbert’s people, and Mr. and Mrs. Allan, and Mr. and Mrs. Harrison.”

“There was a time when you’d hardly have numbered Mr. Harrison among your dearest friends,” said Marilla drily.

“Well, I wasn’t VERY strongly attracted to him at our first meeting,” acknowledged Anne, with a laugh over the recollection. “But Mr. Harrison has improved on acquaintance, and Mrs. Harrison is really a dear. Then, of course, there are Miss Lavendar and Paul.”

“Have they decided to come to the Island this summer? I thought they were going to Europe.”

“They changed their minds when I wrote them I was going to be married. I had a letter from Paul today. He says he MUST come to my wedding, no matter what happens to Europe.”

“That child always idolised you,” remarked Mrs. Rachel.

“That ‘child’ is a young man of nineteen now, Mrs. Lynde.”

“How time does fly!” was Mrs. Lynde’s brilliant and original response.

“Charlotta the Fourth may come with them. She sent word by Paul that she would come if her husband would let her. I wonder if she still wears those enormous blue bows, and whether her husband calls her Charlotta or Leonora. I should love to have Charlotta at my wedding. Charlotta and I were at a wedding long syne. They expect to be at Echo Lodge next week. Then there are Phil and the Reverend Jo — —”

“It sounds awful to hear you speaking of a minister like that, Anne,” said Mrs. Rachel severely.

“His wife calls him that.”

“She should have more respect for his holy office, then,” retorted Mrs. Rachel.

“I’ve heard you criticise ministers pretty sharply yourself,” teased Anne.

“Yes, but I do it reverently,” protested Mrs. Lynde. “You never heard me NICKNAME a minister.”

Anne smothered a smile.

“Well, there are Diana and Fred and little Fred and Small Anne Cordelia — and Jane Andrews. I wish I could have Miss Stacey and Aunt Jamesina and Priscilla and Stella. But Stella is in Vancouver, and Pris is in Japan, and Miss Stacey is married in California, and Aunt Jamesina has gone to India to explore her daughter’s mission field, in spite of her horror of snakes. It’s really dreadful — the way people get scattered over the globe.”

“The Lord never intended it, that’s what,” said Mrs. Rachel authoritatively. “In my young days people grew up and married and settled down where they were born, or pretty near it. Thank goodness you’ve stuck to the Island, Anne. I was afraid Gilbert would insist on rushing off to the ends of the earth when he got through college, and dragging you with him.”

“If everybody stayed where he was born places would soon be filled up, Mrs. Lynde.”

“Oh, I’m not going to argue with you, Anne. I am not a B.A. What time of the day is the ceremony to be?”

“We have decided on noon — high noon, as the society reporters say. That will give us time to catch the evening train to Glen St. Mary.”

“And you’ll be married in the parlor?”

“No — not unless it rains. We mean to be married in the orchard — with the blue sky over us and the sunshine around us. Do you know when and where I’d like to be married, if I could? It would be at dawn — a June dawn, with a glorious sunrise, and roses blooming in the gardens; and I would slip down and meet Gilbert and we would go together to the heart of the beech woods, — and there, under the green arches that would be like a splendid cathedral, we would be married.”

Marilla sniffed scornfully and Mrs. Lynde looked shocked.

“But that would be terrible queer, Anne. Why, it wouldn’t really seem legal. And what would Mrs. Harmon Andrews say?”

“Ah, there’s the rub,” sighed Anne. “There are so many things in life we cannot do because of the fear of what Mrs. Harmon Andrews would say. ‘Tis true, ‘tis pity, and pity ‘tis, ‘tis true.’ What delightful things we might do were it not for Mrs. Harmon Andrews!”

“By times, Anne, I don’t feel quite sure that I understand you altogether,” complained Mrs. Lynde.

“Anne was always romantic, you know,” said Marilla apologetically.

“Well, married life will most likely cure her of that,” Mrs. Rachel responded comfortingly.

Anne laughed and slipped away to Lover's Lane, where Gilbert found her; and neither of them seemed to entertain much fear, or hope, that their married life would cure them of romance.

The Echo Lodge people came over the next week, and Green Gables buzzed with the delight of them. Miss Lavendar had changed so little that the three years since her last Island visit might have been a watch in the night; but Anne gasped with amazement over Paul. Could this splendid six feet of manhood be the little Paul of Avonlea schooldays?

"You really make me feel old, Paul," said Anne. "Why, I have to look up to you!"

"You'll never grow old, Teacher," said Paul. "You are one of the fortunate mortals who have found and drunk from the Fountain of Youth, — you and Mother Lavendar. See here! When you're married I WON'T call you Mrs. Blythe. To me you'll always be 'Teacher' — the teacher of the best lessons I ever learned. I want to show you something."

The "something" was a pocketbook full of poems. Paul had put some of his beautiful fancies into verse, and magazine editors had not been as unappreciative as they are sometimes supposed to be. Anne read Paul's poems with real delight. They were full of charm and promise.

"You'll be famous yet, Paul. I always dreamed of having one famous pupil. He was to be a college president — but a great poet would be even better. Some day I'll be able to boast that I whipped the distinguished Paul Irving. But then I never did whip you, did I, Paul? What an opportunity lost! I think I kept you in at recess, however."

"You may be famous yourself, Teacher. I've seen a good deal of your work these last three years."

“No. I know what I can do. I can write pretty, fanciful little sketches that children love and editors send welcome cheques for. But I can do nothing big. My only chance for earthly immortality is a corner in your Memoirs.”

Charlotta the Fourth had discarded the blue bows but her freckles were not noticeably less.

“I never did think I’d come down to marrying a Yankee, Miss Shirley, ma’am,” she said. “But you never know what’s before you, and it isn’t his fault. He was born that way.”

“You’re a Yankee yourself, Charlotta, since you’ve married one.”

“Miss Shirley, ma’am, I’m NOT! And I wouldn’t be if I was to marry a dozen Yankees! Tom’s kind of nice. And besides, I thought I’d better not be too hard to please, for I mightn’t get another chance. Tom don’t drink and he don’t growl because he has to work between meals, and when all’s said and done I’m satisfied, Miss Shirley, ma’am.”

“Does he call you Leonora?” asked Anne.

“Goodness, no, Miss Shirley, ma’am. I wouldn’t know who he meant if he did. Of course, when we got married he had to say, ‘I take thee, Leonora,’ and I declare to you, Miss Shirley, ma’am, I’ve had the most dreadful feeling ever since that it wasn’t me he was talking to and I haven’t been rightly married at all. And so you’re going to be married yourself, Miss Shirley, ma’am? I always thought I’d like to marry a doctor. It would be so handy when the children had measles and croup. Tom is only a bricklayer, but he’s real good-tempered. When I said to him, says I, ‘Tom, can I go to Miss Shirley’s wedding? I mean to go anyhow, but I’d like to have your consent,’ he just says, ‘Suit yourself, Charlotta, and you’ll suit me.’ That’s a real pleasant kind of husband to have, Miss Shirley, ma’am.”

Philippa and her Reverend Jo arrived at Green Gables the day before the wedding. Anne and Phil had a rapturous meeting which presently simmered down to a cosy, confidential chat over all that had been and was about to be.

“Queen Anne, you’re as queenly as ever. I’ve got fearfully thin since the babies came. I’m not half so goodlooking; but I think Jo likes it. There’s not such a contrast between us, you see. And oh, it’s perfectly magnificent that you’re going to marry Gilbert. Roy Gardner wouldn’t have done at all, at all. I can see that now, though I was horribly disappointed at the time. You know, Anne, you did treat Roy very badly.”

“He has recovered, I understand,” smiled Anne.

“Oh, yes. He is married and his wife is a sweet little thing and they’re perfectly happy. Everything works together for good. Jo and the Bible say that, and they are pretty good authorities.”

“Are Alec and Alonzo married yet?”

“Alec is, but Alonzo isn’t. How those dear old days at Patty’s Place come back when I’m talking to you, Anne! What fun we had!”

“Have you been to Patty’s Place lately?”

“Oh, yes, I go often. Miss Patty and Miss Maria still sit by the fireplace and knit. And that reminds me — we’ve brought you a wedding gift from them, Anne. Guess what it is.”

“I never could. How did they know I was going to be married?”

“Oh, I told them. I was there last week. And they were so interested. Two days ago Miss Patty wrote me a note asking me to call; and then she asked if I would take her gift to you. What would you wish most from Patty’s Place, Anne?”

“You can’t mean that Miss Patty has sent me her china dogs?”

“Go up head. They’re in my trunk this very moment. And I’ve a letter for you. Wait a moment and I’ll get it.”

“Dear Miss Shirley,” Miss Patty had written, “Maria and I were very much interested in hearing of your approaching nuptials. We send you our best wishes. Maria and I have never married, but we have no objection to other people doing so. We are sending you the china dogs. I intended to leave them to you in my will, because you seemed to have sincere affection for them. But Maria and I expect to live a good while yet (D.V.), so I have decided to give you the dogs while you are young. You will not have forgotten that Gog looks to the right and Magog to the left.”

“Just fancy those lovely old dogs sitting by the fireplace in my house of dreams,” said Anne rapturously. “I never expected anything so delightful.”

That evening Green Gables hummed with preparations for the following day; but in the twilight Anne slipped away. She had a little pilgrimage to make on this last day of her girlhood and she must make it alone. She went to Matthew’s grave, in the little poplar-shaded Avonlea graveyard, and there kept a silent tryst with old memories and immortal loves.

“How glad Matthew would be tomorrow if he were here,” she whispered. “But I believe he does know and is glad of it — somewhere else. I’ve read somewhere that ‘our dead are never dead until we have forgotten them.’ Matthew will never be dead to me, for I can never forget him.”

She left on his grave the flowers she had brought and walked slowly down the long hill. It was a gracious evening, full of delectable lights and shadows. In the west was a sky of mackerel clouds — crimson and amber-tinted, with long

strips of apple-green sky between. Beyond was the glimmering radiance of a sunset sea, and the ceaseless voice of many waters came up from the tawny shore. All around her, lying in the fine, beautiful country silence, were the hills and fields and woods she had known and loved so long.

“History repeats itself,” said Gilbert, joining her as she passed the Blythe gate. “Do you remember our first walk down this hill, Anne — our first walk together anywhere, for that matter?”

“I was coming home in the twilight from Matthew’s grave — and you came out of the gate; and I swallowed the pride of years and spoke to you.”

“And all heaven opened before me,” supplemented Gilbert. “From that moment I looked forward to tomorrow. When I left you at your gate that night and walked home I was the happiest boy in the world. Anne had forgiven me.”

“I think you had the most to forgive. I was an ungrateful little wretch — and after you had really saved my life that day on the pond, too. How I loathed that load of obligation at first! I don’t deserve the happiness that has come to me.”

Gilbert laughed and clasped tighter the girlish hand that wore his ring. Anne’s engagement ring was a circlet of pearls. She had refused to wear a diamond.

“I’ve never really liked diamonds since I found out they weren’t the lovely purple I had dreamed. They will always suggest my old disappointment.”

“But pearls are for tears, the old legend says,” Gilbert had objected.

“I’m not afraid of that. And tears can be happy as well as sad. My very happiest moments have been when I had tears in my eyes — when Marilla told me I might stay at Green Gables — when Matthew gave me the first pretty dress I

ever had — when I heard that you were going to recover from the fever. So give me pearls for our troth ring, Gilbert, and I'll willingly accept the sorrow of life with its joy.”

But tonight our lovers thought only of joy and never of sorrow. For the morrow was their wedding day, and their house of dreams awaited them on the misty, purple shore of Four Winds Harbor.

IV. The First Bride of Green Gables

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Anne awakened on the morning of her wedding day to find the sunshine winking in at the window of the little porch gable and a September breeze frolicking with her curtains.

“I’m so glad the sun will shine on me,” she thought happily.

She recalled the first morning she had awakened in that little porch room, when the sunshine had crept in on her through the blossom-drift of the old Snow Queen. That had not been a happy waking, for it brought with it the bitter disappointment of the preceding night. But since then the little room had been endeared and consecrated by years of happy childhood dreams and maiden visions. To it she had come back joyfully after all her absences; at its window she had knelt through that night of bitter agony when she believed Gilbert dying, and by it she had sat in speechless happiness the night of her betrothal. Many vigils of joy and some of sorrow had been kept there; and today she must leave it forever. Henceforth it would be hers no more; fifteen-year-old Dora was to inherit it when she had gone. Nor did Anne wish it otherwise; the little room was sacred to youth and girlhood — to the past that was to close today before the chapter of wifhood opened.

Green Gables was a busy and joyous house that forenoon. Diana arrived early, with little Fred and Small Anne Cordelia, to lend a hand. Davy and Dora, the Green Gables twins, whisked the babies off to the garden.