

**LUCY MAUD  
MONTGOMERY**



**ANNE  
OF WINDY  
POPLARS**

**Lucy Maud Montgomery**

# **Anne of Windy Poplars**

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# Table of Contents

## **The First Year**

[Chapter 1](#)  
[Chapter 2](#)  
[Chapter 3](#)  
[Chapter 4](#)  
[Chapter 5](#)  
[Chapter 6](#)  
[Chapter 7](#)  
[Chapter 8](#)  
[Chapter 9](#)  
[Chapter 10](#)  
[Chapter 11](#)  
[Chapter 12](#)  
[Chapter 13](#)  
[Chapter 14](#)  
[Chapter 15](#)  
[Chapter 16](#)  
[Chapter 17](#)

## **The Second Year**

[Chapter 1](#)  
[Chapter 2](#)  
[Chapter 3](#)  
[Chapter 4](#)  
[Chapter 5](#)  
[Chapter 6](#)  
[Chapter 7](#)  
[Chapter 8](#)  
[Chapter 9](#)  
[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

### **The Third Year**

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

# The First Year

## Chapter 1

### [Table of Contents](#)

(Letter from Anne Shirley, B.A., Principal of Summerside High School, to Gilbert Blythe, medical student at Redmond College, Kingsport.)

“Windy Poplars,  
“Spook’s Lane,  
“S’side, P. E. I.,  
“Monday, September 12th.

“DEAREST:

“Isn’t that an address! Did you ever hear anything so delicious? Windy Poplars is the name of my new home and I love it. I also love Spook’s Lane, which has no legal existence. It should be Trent Street but it is never called Trent Street except on the rare occasions when it is mentioned in the Weekly Courier ... and then people look at each other and say, ‘Where on earth is that?’ Spook’s Lane it is ... although for what reason I cannot tell you. I have already asked Rebecca Dew about it, but all she can say is that it has always been Spook’s Lane and there was some old yarn years ago of its being haunted. But she has never seen anything worse-looking than herself in it.

“However, I mustn’t get ahead of my story. You don’t know Rebecca Dew yet. But you will, oh, yes, you will. I foresee that Rebecca Dew will figure largely in my future correspondence.

“It’s dusk, dearest. (In passing, isn’t ‘dusk’ a lovely word? I like it better than twilight. It sounds so velvety and shadowy and ... and ... dusky.) In daylight I belong to the

world ... in the night to sleep and eternity. But in the dusk I'm free from both and belong only to myself ... and you. So I'm going to keep this hour sacred to writing to you. Though this won't be a love-letter. I have a scratchy pen and I can't write love-letters with a scratchy pen ... or a sharp pen ... or a stub pen. So you'll only get that kind of letter from me when I have exactly the right kind of pen. Meanwhile, I'll tell you about my new domicile and its inhabitants. Gilbert, they're such dears.

"I came up yesterday to look for a boardinghouse. Mrs. Rachel Lynde came with me, ostensibly to do some shopping but really, I know, to choose a boardinghouse for me. In spite of my Arts course and my B.A., Mrs. Lynde still thinks I am an inexperienced young thing who must be guided and directed and overseen.

"We came by train and oh, Gilbert, I had the funniest adventure. You know I've always been one to whom adventures came unsought. I just seem to attract them, as it were.

"It happened just as the train was coming to a stop at the station. I got up and, stooping to pick up Mrs. Lynde's suitcase (she was planning to spend Sunday with a friend in Summerside), I leaned my knuckles heavily on what I thought was the shiny arm of a seat. In a second I received a violent crack across them that nearly made me howl. Gilbert, what I had taken for the arm of a seat was a man's bald head. He was glaring fiercely at me and had evidently just waked up. I apologized abjectly and got off the train as quickly as possible. The last I saw of him he was still glaring. Mrs. Lynde was horrified and my knuckles are sore yet!

"I did not expect to have much trouble in finding a boardinghouse, for a certain Mrs. Tom Pringle has been boarding the various principals of the High School for the last fifteen years. But, for some unknown reason, she has grown suddenly tired of 'being bothered' and wouldn't take me. Several other desirable places had some polite excuse.

Several other places weren't desirable. We wandered about the town the whole afternoon and got hot and tired and blue and headachy ... at least I did. I was ready to give up in despair ... and then, Spook's Lane just happened!

"We had dropped in to see Mrs. Braddock, an old crony of Mrs. Lynde's. And Mrs. Braddock said she thought 'the widows' might take me in.

"I've heard they want a boarder to pay Rebecca Dew's wages. They can't afford to keep Rebecca any longer unless a little extra money comes in. And if Rebecca goes, who is to milk that old red cow?"

"Mrs. Braddock fixed me with a stern eye as if she thought I ought to milk the red cow but wouldn't believe me on oath if I claimed I could.

"What widows are you talking about?" demanded Mrs. Lynde.

"Why, Aunt Kate and Aunt Chatty," said Mrs. Braddock, as if everybody, even an ignorant B.A., ought to know that. 'Aunt Kate is Mrs. Amasa MacComber (she's the Captain's widow) and Aunt Chatty is Mrs. Lincoln MacLean, just a plain widow. But every one calls them "aunt." They live at the end of Spook's Lane.'

"Spook's Lane! That settled it. I knew I just had to board with the widows.

"Let's go and see them at once," I implored Mrs. Lynde. It seemed to me if we lost a moment Spook's Lane would vanish back into fairyland.

"You can see them, but it'll be Rebecca who'll really decide whether they'll take you or not. Rebecca Dew rules the roost at Windy Poplars, I can tell you."

"Windy Poplars! It couldn't be true ... no it couldn't. I must be dreaming. And Mrs. Rachel Lynde was actually saying it was a funny name for a place.

"Oh, Captain MacComber called it that. It was his house, you know. He planted all the poplars round it and was mighty proud of it, though he was seldom home and never

stayed long. Aunt Kate used to say that was inconvenient, but we never got it figured out whether she meant his staying such a little time or his coming back at all. Well, Miss Shirley, I hope you'll get there. Rebecca Dew's a good cook and a genius with cold potatoes. If she takes a notion to you you'll be in clover. If she doesn't ... well, she won't, that's all. I hear there's a new banker in town looking for a boardinghouse and she may prefer him. It's kind of funny Mrs. Tom Pringle wouldn't take you. Summerside is full of Pringles and half Pringles. They're called "The Royal Family" and you'll have to get on their good side, Miss Shirley, or you'll never get along in Summerside High. They've always ruled the roost hereabouts ... there's a street called after old Captain Abraham Pringle. There's a regular clan of them, but the two old ladies at Maplehurst boss the tribe. I did hear they were down on you.'

"'Why should they be?' I exclaimed. 'I'm a total stranger to them.'

"'Well, a third cousin of theirs applied for the Principalship and they all think he should have got it. When your application was accepted the whole kit and boodle of them threw back their heads and howled. Well, people are like that. We have to take them as we find them, you know. They'll be as smooth as cream to you but they'll work against you every time. I'm not wanting to discourage you but forewarned is forearmed. I hope you'll make good just to spite them. If the widows take you, you won't mind eating with Rebecca Dew, will you? She isn't a servant, you know. She's a far-off cousin of the Captain's. She doesn't come to the table when there's company ... she knows her place then ... but if you were boarding there she wouldn't consider you company, of course.'

"I assured the anxious Mrs. Braddock that I'd love eating with Rebecca Dew and dragged Mrs. Lynde away. I must get ahead of the banker.

"Mrs. Braddock followed us to the door.



“‘And don’t hurt Aunt Chatty’s feelings, will you? Her feelings are so easily hurt. She’s so sensitive, poor thing. You see, she hasn’t quite as much money as Aunt Kate ... though Aunt Kate hasn’t any too much either. And then Aunt Kate liked her husband real well ... her own husband, I mean ... but Aunt Chatty didn’t ... didn’t like hers, I mean. Small wonder! Lincoln MacLean was an old crank ... but she thinks people hold it against her. It’s lucky this is Saturday. If it was Friday Aunt Chatty wouldn’t even consider taking you. You’d think Aunt Kate would be the superstitious one, wouldn’t you? Sailors are kind of like that. But it’s Aunt Chatty ... although her husband was a carpenter. She was very pretty in her day, poor thing.’

“I assured Mrs. Braddock that Aunt Chatty’s feelings would be sacred to me, but she followed us down the walk.

“‘Kate and Chatty won’t explore your belongings when you’re out. They’re very conscientious. Rebecca Dew may, but she won’t tell on you. And I wouldn’t go to the front door if I was you. They only use it for something real important. I don’t think it’s been opened since Amasa’s funeral. Try the side door. They keep the key under the flower-pot on the windowsill, so if nobody’s home just unlock the door and go in and wait. And whatever you do, don’t praise the cat, because Rebecca Dew doesn’t like him.’

“I promised I wouldn’t praise the cat and we actually got away. Erelong we found ourselves in Spook’s Lane. It is a very short side street, leading out to open country, and far away a blue hill makes a beautiful backdrop for it. On one side there are no houses at all and the land slopes down to the harbor. On the other side there are only three. The first one is just a house ... nothing more to be said of it. The next one is a big, imposing, gloomy mansion of stone-trimmed red brick, with a mansard roof warty with dormer-windows, an iron railing around the flat top and so many spruces and firs crowding about it that you can hardly see the house. It must be frightfully dark inside. And the third and last is

Windy Poplars, right on the corner, with the grass-grown street on the front and a real country road, beautiful with tree shadows, on the other side.

“I fell in love with it at once. You know there are houses which impress themselves upon you at first sight for some reason you can hardly define. Windy Poplars is like that. I may describe it to you as a white frame house ... very white ... with green shutters ... very green ... with a ‘tower’ in the corner and a dormer-window on either side, a low stone wall dividing it from the street, with aspen poplars growing at intervals along it, and a big garden at the back where flowers and vegetables are delightfully jumbled up together ... but all this can’t convey its charm to you. In short, it is a house with a delightful personality and has something of the flavor of Green Gables about it.

“‘This is the spot for me ... it’s been foreordained,’ I said rapturously.

“Mrs. Lynde looked as if she didn’t quite trust foreordination.

“‘It’ll be a long walk to school,’ she said dubiously.

“‘I don’t mind that. It will be good exercise. Oh, look at that lovely birch and maple grove across the road.’

“Mrs. Lynde looked but all she said was,

“‘I hope you won’t be pestered with mosquitoes.’

“I hoped so, too. I detest mosquitoes. One mosquito can keep me ‘awaker’ than a bad conscience.

“I was glad we didn’t have to go in by the front door. It looked so forbidding ... a big, double-leaved, grained-wood affair, flanked by panels of red, flowered glass. It doesn’t seem to belong to the house at all. The little green side door, which we reached by a darling path of thin, flat sandstones sunk at intervals in the grass, was much more friendly and inviting. The path was edged by very prim, well-ordered beds of ribbon grass and bleeding-heart and tiger-lilies and sweet-William and southernwood and bride’s bouquet and red-and-white daisies and what Mrs. Lynde

calls 'pinies.' Of course they weren't all in bloom at this season, but you could see they had bloomed at the proper time and done it well. There was a rose plot in a far corner and between Windy Poplars and the gloomy house next a brick wall all overgrown with Virginia creeper, with an arched trellis above a faded green door in the middle of it. A vine ran right across it, so it was plain it hadn't been opened for some time. It was really only half a door, for its top half is merely an open oblong through which we could catch a glimpse of a jungly garden on the other side.

"Just as we entered the gate of the garden of Windy Poplars I noticed a little clump of clover right by the path. Some impulse led me to stoop down and look at it. Would you believe it, Gilbert? There, right before my eyes, were three four-leafed clovers! Talk about omens! Even the Pringles can't contend against that. And I felt sure the banker hadn't an earthly chance.

"The side door was open so it was evident somebody was at home and we didn't have to look under the flower-pot. We knocked and Rebecca Dew came to the door. We knew it was Rebecca Dew because it couldn't have been any one else in the whole wide world. And she couldn't have had any other name.

"Rebecca Dew is 'around forty' and if a tomato had black hair racing away from its forehead, little twinkling black eyes, a tiny nose with a knobby end and a slit of a mouth, it would look exactly like her. Everything about her is a little too short ... arms and legs and neck and nose ... everything but her smile. It is long enough to reach from ear to ear.

"But we didn't see her smile just then. She looked very grim when I asked if I could see Mrs. MacComber.

"'You mean Mrs. Captain MacComber?' she said rebukingly, as if there were at least a dozen Mrs. MacCombers in the house.

"'Yes,' I said meekly. And we were forthwith ushered into the parlor and left there. It was rather a nice little room, a

bit cluttered up with antimacassars but with a quiet, friendly atmosphere about it that I liked. Every bit of furniture had its own particular place which it had occupied for years. How that furniture shone! No bought polish ever produced that mirrorlike gloss. I knew it was Rebecca Dew's elbow grease. There was a full-rigged ship in a bottle on the mantelpiece which interested Mrs. Lynde greatly. She couldn't imagine how it ever got into the bottle ... but she thought it gave the room 'a nautical air.'

"The widows' came in. I liked them at once. Aunt Kate was tall and thin and gray, and a little austere ... Marilla's type exactly: and Aunt Chatty was short and thin and gray, and a little wistful. She may have been very pretty once but nothing is now left of her beauty except her eyes. They are lovely ... soft and big and brown.

"I explained my errand and the widows looked at each other.

"We must consult Rebecca Dew,' said Aunt Chatty.

"Undoubtedly,' said Aunt Kate.

"Rebecca Dew was accordingly summoned from the kitchen. The cat came in with her ... a big fluffy Maltese, with a white breast and a white collar. I should have liked to stroke him, but, remembering Mrs. Braddock's warning, I ignored him.

"Rebecca gazed at me without the glimmer of a smile.

"Rebecca,' said Aunt Kate, who, I have discovered, does not waste words, 'Miss Shirley wishes to board here. I don't think we can take her.'

"Why not?' said Rebecca Dew.

"It would be too much trouble for you, I am afraid,' said Aunt Chatty.

"I'm well used to trouble,' said Rebecca Dew. You can't separate those names, Gilbert. It's impossible ... though the widows do it. They call her Rebecca when they speak to her. I don't know how they manage it.

“‘We are rather old to have young people coming and going,’ persisted Aunt Chatty.

“‘Speak for yourself,’ retorted Rebecca Dew. ‘I’m only forty-five and I still have the use of my faculties. And I think it would be nice to have a young person sleeping in the house. A girl would be better than a boy any time. He’d be smoking day and night ... burn us in our beds. If you must take a boarder, my advice would be to take her. But of course it’s your house.’

“She said and vanished ... as Homer was so fond of remarking. I knew the whole thing was settled but Aunt Chatty said I must go up and see if I was suited with my room.

“‘We will give you the tower room, dear. It’s not quite as large as the spare room, but it has a stovepipe hole for a stove in winter and a much nicer view. You can see the old graveyard from it.’

“I knew I would love the room ... the very name, ‘tower room,’ thrilled me. I felt as if we were living in that old song we used to sing in Avonlea School about the maiden who ‘dwelt in a high tower beside a gray sea.’ It proved to be the dearest place. We ascended to it by a little flight of corner steps leading up from the stair-landing. It was rather small ... but not nearly as small as that dreadful hall bedroom I had my first year at Redmond. It had two windows, a dormer one looking west and a gable one looking north, and in the corner formed by the tower another three-sided window with casements opening outward and shelves underneath for my books. The floor was covered with round, braided rugs, the big bed had a canopy top and a ‘wild-goose’ quilt and looked so perfectly smooth and level that it seemed a shame to spoil it by sleeping in it. And, Gilbert, it is so high that I have to climb into it by a funny little movable set of steps which in daytime are stowed away under it. It seems Captain MacComber bought the whole contraption in some ‘foreign’ place and brought it home.

“There was a dear little corner cupboard with shelves trimmed with white scalloped paper and bouquets painted on its door. There was a round blue cushion on the window-seat ... a cushion with a button deep in the center, making it look like a fat blue doughnut. And there was a sweet washstand with two shelves ... the top one just big enough for a basin and jug of robin’s-egg blue and the under one for a soap dish and hot water pitcher. It had a little brass-handled drawer full of towels and on a shelf over it a white china lady sat, with pink shoes and gilt sash and a red china rose in her golden china hair.

“The whole place was engoldened by the light that came through the corn-colored curtains and there was the rarest tapestry on the whitewashed walls where the shadow patterns of the aspens outside fell ... living tapestry, always changing and quivering. Somehow, it seemed such a happy room. I felt as if I were the richest girl in the world.

“‘You’ll be safe there, that’s what,’ said Mrs. Lynde, as we went away.

“‘I expect I’ll find some things a bit cramping after the freedom of Patty’s Place,’ I said, just to tease her.

“‘Freedom!’ Mrs. Lynde sniffed. ‘Freedom! Don’t talk like a Yankee, Anne.’

“I came up today, bag and baggage. Of course I hated to leave Green Gables. No matter how often and long I’m away from it, the minute a vacation comes I’m part of it again as if I had never been away, and my heart is torn over leaving it. But I know I’ll like it here. And it likes me. I always know whether a house likes me or not.

“The views from my windows are lovely ... even the old graveyard, which is surrounded by a row of dark fir trees and reached by a winding, dyke-bordered lane. From my west window I can see all over the harbor to distant, misty shores, with the dear little sailboats I love and the ships outward bound ‘for ports unknown’ ... fascinating phrase! Such ‘scope for imagination’ in it! From the north window I

can see into the grove of birch and maple across the road. You know I've always been a tree worshiper. When we studied Tennyson in our English course at Redmond I was always sorrowfully at one with poor Enone, mourning her ravished pines.

"Beyond the grove and the graveyard is a lovable valley with the glossy red ribbon of a road winding through it and white houses dotted along it. Some valleys are lovable ... you can't tell why. Just to look at them gives you pleasure. And beyond it again is my blue hill. I'm naming it Storm King ... the ruling passion, *etc.*

"I can be so alone up here when I want to be. You know it's lovely to be alone once in a while. The winds will be my friends. They'll wail and sigh and croon around my tower ... the white winds of winter ... the green winds of spring ... the blue winds of summer ... the crimson winds of autumn ... and the wild winds of all seasons ... 'stormy wind fulfilling his word.' How I've always thrilled to that Bible verse ... as if each and every wind had a message for me. I've always envied the boy who flew with the north wind in that lovely old story of George MacDonald's. Some night, Gilbert, I'll open my tower casement and just step into the arms of the wind ... and Rebecca Dew will never know why my bed wasn't slept in that night.

"I hope when we find our 'house of dreams,' dearest, that there will be winds around it. I wonder where it is ... that unknown house. Shall I love it best by moonlight or dawn? That home of the future where we will have love and friendship and work ... and a few funny adventures to bring laughter in our old age. Old age! Can we ever be old, Gilbert? It seems impossible.

"From the left window in the tower I can see the roofs of the town ... this place where I am to live for at least a year. People are living in those houses who will be my friends, though I don't know them yet. And perhaps my enemies. For the ilk of Pye are found everywhere, under all kinds of

names, and I understand the Pringles are to be reckoned with. School begins tomorrow. I shall have to teach geometry! Surely that can't be any worse than learning it. I pray heaven there are no mathematical geniuses among the Pringles.

"I've been here only for half a day, but I feel as if I had known the widows and Rebecca Dew all my life. They've asked me to call them 'aunt' already and I've asked them to call me Anne. I called Rebecca Dew 'Miss Dew' ... once.

"'Miss What?' quoth she.

"'Dew,' I said meekly. 'Isn't that your name?'

"'Well, yes, it is, but I ain't been called Miss Dew for so long it gave me quite a turn. You'd better not do it any more, Miss Shirley, me not being used to it.'

"'I'll remember, Rebecca ... Dew,' I said, trying my hardest to leave off the Dew but not succeeding.

"Mrs. Braddock was quite right in saying Aunt Chatty was sensitive. I discovered that at suppertime. Aunt Kate had said something about 'Chatty's sixty-sixth birthday.' Happening to glance at Aunt Chatty I saw that she had ... no, not burst into tears. That is entirely too explosive a term for her performance. She just overflowed. The tears welled up in her big brown eyes and brimmed over, effortlessly and silently.

"'What's the matter now, Chatty?' asked Aunt Kate rather dourly.

"'It ... it was only my sixty-fifth birthday,' said Aunt Chatty.

"'I beg your pardon, Charlotte,' said Aunt Kate ... and all was sunshine again.

"The cat is a lovely big Tommy-cat with golden eyes, an elegant coat of dusty Maltese and irreproachable linen. Aunts Kate and Chatty call him Dusty Miller, because that is his name, and Rebecca Dew calls him That Cat because she resents him and resents the fact that she has to give him a square inch of liver every morning and evening, clean his



hairs off the parlor armchair seat with an old toothbrush whenever he has sneaked in and hunt him up if he is out late at night.

“‘Rebecca Dew has always hated cats,’ Aunt Chatty tells me, ‘and she hates Dusty especially. Old Mrs. Campbell’s dog ... she kept a dog then ... brought him here two years ago in his mouth. I suppose he thought it was no use to take him to Mrs. Campbell. Such a poor miserable little kitten, all wet and cold, with its poor little bones almost sticking through its skin. A heart of stone couldn’t have refused it shelter. So Kate and I adopted it, but Rebecca Dew has never really forgiven us. We were not diplomatic that time. We should have refused to take it in. I don’t know if you’ve noticed ...’ Aunt Chatty looked cautiously around at the door between the dining-room and kitchen ... ‘how we manage Rebecca Dew.’

“I had noticed it ... and it was beautiful to behold. Summerside and Rebecca Dew may think she rules the roost but the widows know differently.

“‘We didn’t want to take the banker ... a young man would have been so unsettling and we would have had to worry so much if he didn’t go to church regularly. But we pretended we did and Rebecca Dew simply wouldn’t hear of it. I’m so glad we have you, dear. I feel sure you’ll be a very nice person to cook for. I hope you’ll like us all. Rebecca Dew has some very fine qualities. She was not so tidy when she came fifteen years ago as she is now. Once Kate had to write her name ... “Rebecca Dew” ... right across the parlor mirror to show the dust. But she never had to do it again. Rebecca Dew can take a hint. I hope you’ll find your room comfortable, dear. You may have the window open at night. Kate does not approve of night air but she knows boarders must have privileges. She and I sleep together and we have arranged it so that one night the window is shut for her and the next it is open for me. One can always work out little problems like that, don’t you think? Where there is a will

there is always a way. Don't be alarmed if you hear Rebecca prowling a good deal in the night. She is always hearing noises and getting up to investigate them. I think that is why she didn't want the banker. She was afraid she might run into him in her nightgown. I hope you won't mind Kate not talking much. It's just her way. And she must have so many things to talk of ... she was all over the world with Amasa MacComber in her young days. I wish I had the subjects for conversation she has, but I've never been off P. E. Island. I've often wondered why things should be arranged so ... me loving to talk and with nothing to talk about and Kate with everything and hating to talk. But I suppose Providence knows best.'

"Although Aunt Chatty is a talker all right, she didn't say all this without a break. I interjected remarks at suitable intervals, but they were of no importance.

"They keep a cow which is pastured at Mr. James Hamilton's up the road and Rebecca Dew goes there to milk her. There is any amount of cream and every morning and evening I understand Rebecca Dew passes a glass of new milk through the opening in the wall gate to Mrs. Campbell's 'Woman.' It is for 'little Elizabeth,' who must have it under doctor's orders. Who the Woman is, or who little Elizabeth is, I have yet to discover. Mrs. Campbell is the inhabitant and owner of the fortress next door ... which is called The Evergreens.

"I don't expect to sleep tonight ... I never do sleep my first night in a strange bed and this is the very strangest bed I've ever seen. But I won't mind. I've always loved the night and I'll like lying awake and thinking over everything in life, past, present and to come. Especially to come.

"This is a merciless letter, Gilbert. I won't inflict such a long one on you again. But I wanted to tell you everything, so that you could picture my new surroundings for yourself. It has come to an end now, for far up the harbor the moon is 'sinking into shadowland.' I must write a letter to Marilla yet.

It will reach Green Gables the day after tomorrow and Davy will bring it home from the postoffice, and he and Dora will crowd around Marilla while she opens it and Mrs. Lynde will have both ears open... . Ow ... w ...w! That has made me homesick. Goodnight, dearest, from one who is now and ever will be,

“Fondestly yours,

“ANNE SHIRLEY.”

## Chapter 2

### [Table of Contents](#)

(Extracts from various letters from the same to the same.)

“September 26th.

“Do you know where I go to read your letters? Across the road into the grove. There is a little dell there where the sun dapples the ferns. A brook meanders through it; there is a twisted mossy tree-trunk on which I sit, and the most delightful row of young sister birches. After this, when I have a dream of a certain kind ... a golden-green, crimson-veined dream ... a very dream of dreams ... I shall please my fancy with the belief that it came from my secret dell of birches and was born of some mystic union between the slenderest, airiest of the sisters and the crooning brook. I love to sit there and listen to the silence of the grove. Have you ever noticed how many different silences there are, Gilbert? The silence of the woods ... of the shore ... of the meadows ... of the night ... of the summer afternoon. All different because all the undertones that thread them are different. I'm sure if I were totally blind and insensitive to heat and cold I could easily tell just where I was by the quality of the silence about me.

“School has been ‘keeping’ for two weeks now and I've got things pretty well organized. But Mrs. Braddock was right ... the Pringles are my problem. And as yet I don't see exactly how I'm going to solve it in spite of my lucky clovers. As Mrs. Braddock says, they are as smooth as cream ... and as slippery.

“The Pringles are a kind of clan who keeps tabs on each other and fight a good bit among themselves but stand shoulder to shoulder in regard to any outsider. I have come to the conclusion that there are just two kinds of people in

Summerside ... those who are Pringles and those who aren't.

"My room is full of Pringles and a good many students who bear another name have Pringle blood in them. The ring-leader of them seems to be Jen Pringle, a green-eyed bantling who looks as Becky Sharp must have looked at fourteen. I believe she is deliberately organizing a subtle campaign of insubordination and disrespect, with which I am going to find it hard to cope. She has a knack of making irresistibly comic faces and when I hear a smothered ripple of laughter running over the room behind my back I know perfectly well what has caused it, but so far I haven't been able to catch her out in it. She has brains, too ... the little wretch! ... can write compositions that are fourth cousins to literature and is quite brilliant in mathematics ... woe is me! There is a certain sparkle in everything she says or does and she has a sense of humorous situations which would be a bond of kinship between us if she hadn't started out by hating me. As it is, I fear it will be a long time before Jen and I can laugh together over anything.

"Myra Pringle, Jen's cousin, is the beauty of the school ... and apparently stupid. She does perpetrate some amusing howlers ... as, for instance, when she said today in history class that the Indians thought Champlain and his men were gods or 'something inhuman.'

"Socially the Pringles are what Rebecca Dew calls 'the e-light' of Summerside. Already I have been invited to two Pringle homes for supper ... because it is the proper thing to invite a new teacher to supper and the Pringles are not going to omit the required gestures. Last night I was at James Pringle's ... the father of the aforesaid Jen. He looks like a college professor but is in reality stupid and ignorant. He talked a great deal about 'discipline,' tapping the tablecloth with a finger the nail of which was not impeccable and occasionally doing dreadful things to grammar. The Summerside High had always required a firm hand ... an

experienced teacher, male preferred. He was afraid I was a leetle too young ... 'a fault which time will cure all too soon,' he said sorrowfully. I didn't say anything because if I had said anything I might have said too much. So I was as smooth and creamy as any Pringle of them all could have been and contented myself with looking limpidly at him and saying inside of myself, 'You cantankerous, prejudiced old creature!'

"Jen must have got her brains from her mother ... whom I found myself liking. Jen, in her parents' presence, was a model of decorum. But though her words were polite her tone was insolent. Every time she said 'Miss Shirley' she contrived to make it sound like an insult. And every time she looked at my hair I felt that it was just plain carrot red. No Pringle, I am certain, would ever admit it was auburn.

"I liked the Morton Pringles much better ... though Morton Pringle never really listens to anything you say. He says something to you and then, while you're replying, he is busy thinking out his next remark.

"Mrs. Stephen Pringle ... the Widow Pringle ... Summerside abounds in widows ... wrote me a letter yesterday ... a nice, polite, poisonous letter. Millie has too much home work ... Millie is a delicate child and must not be overworked. Mr. Bell never gave her home work. She is a sensitive child that must be understood. Mr. Bell understood her so well! Mrs. Stephen is sure I will, too, if I try!

"I do not doubt Mrs. Stephen thinks I made Adam Pringle's nose bleed in class today by reason of which he had to go home. And I woke up last night and couldn't go to sleep again because I remembered an i I hadn't dotted in a question I wrote on the board. I'm certain Jen Pringle would notice it and a whisper will go around the clan about it.

"Rebecca Dew says that all the Pringles will invite me to supper, except the old ladies at Maplehurst, and then ignore me forever afterwards. As they are the 'e-light,' this may mean that socially I may be banned in Summerside. Well,

we'll see. The battle is on but is not yet either won or lost. Still, I feel rather unhappy over it all. You can't reason with prejudice. I'm still just as I used to be in my childhood ... I can't bear to have people not liking me. It isn't pleasant to think that the families of half my pupils hate me. And for no fault of my own. It is the injustice that stings me. There go more italics! But a few italics really do relieve your feelings.

"Apart from the Pringles I like my pupils very much. There are some clever, ambitious, hardworking ones who are really interested in getting an education. Lewis Allen is paying for his board by doing housework at his boardinghouse and isn't a bit ashamed of it. And Sophy Sinclair rides bareback on her father's old gray mare six miles in and six miles out every day. There's pluck for you! If I can help a girl like that, am I to mind the Pringles?

"The trouble is ... if I can't win the Pringles I won't have much chance of helping anybody.

"But I love Windy Poplars. It isn't a boardinghouse ... it's a home! And they like me ... even Dusty Miller likes me, though he sometimes disapproves of me and shows it by deliberately sitting with his back turned towards me, occasionally cocking a golden eye over his shoulder at me to see how I'm taking it. I don't pet him much when Rebecca Dew is around because it really does irritate her. By day he is a homely, comfortable, meditative animal ... but he is decidedly a weird creature at night. Rebecca says it is because he is never allowed to stay out after dark. She hates to stand in the back yard and call him. She says the neighbors will all be laughing at her. She calls in such fierce, stentorian tones that she really can be heard all over the town on a still night shouting for 'Puss ... puss ... PUSS!' The widows would have a conniption if Dusty Miller wasn't in when they went to bed. 'Nobody knows what I've gone through on account of That Cat... nobody,' Rebecca has assured me.

“The widows are going to wear well. Every day I like them better. Aunt Kate doesn’t believe in reading novels, but informs me that she does not propose to censor my reading-matter. Aunt Chatty loves novels. She has a ‘hidy-hole’ where she keeps them ... she smuggles them in from the town library ... together with a pack of cards for solitaire and anything else she doesn’t want Aunt Kate to see. It is in a chair seat which nobody but Aunt Chatty knows is more than a chair seat. She has shared the secret with me, because, I strongly suspect, she wants me to aid and abet her in the aforesaid smuggling. There shouldn’t really be any need for hidy-holes at Windy Poplars, for I never saw a house with so many mysterious cupboards. Though to be sure, Rebecca Dew won’t let them be mysterious. She is always cleaning them out ferociously. ‘A house can’t keep itself clean,’ she says sorrowfully when either of the widows protests. I am sure she would make short work of a novel or a pack of cards if she found them. They are both a horror to her orthodox soul. Rebecca Dew says cards are the devil’s books and novels even worse. The only things Rebecca ever reads, apart from her Bible, are the society columns of the Montreal Guardian. She loves to pore over the houses and furniture and doings of millionaires.

“‘Just fancy soaking in a golden bathtub, Miss Shirley,’ she said wistfully.

“But she’s really an old duck. She has produced from somewhere a comfortable old wing chair of faded brocade that just fits my kinks and says, ‘This is your chair. We’ll keep it for you.’ And she won’t let Dusty Miller sleep on it lest I get hairs on my school skirt and give the Pringles something to talk about.

“The whole three are very much interested in my circlet of pearls ... and what it signifies. Aunt Kate showed me her engagement ring (she can’t wear it because it has grown too small) set with turquoises. But poor Aunt Chatty owned to me with tears in her eyes that she had never had an



engagement ring ... her husband thought it 'an unnecessary expenditure.' She was in my room at the time, giving her face a bath in buttermilk. She does it every night to preserve her complexion, and has sworn me to secrecy because she doesn't want Aunt Kate to know it.

"She would think it ridiculous vanity in a woman of my age. And I am sure Rebecca Dew thinks that no Christian woman should try to be beautiful. I used to slip down to the kitchen to do it after Kate had gone to sleep but I was always afraid of Rebecca Dew coming down. She has ears like a cat's even when she is asleep. If I could just slip in here every night and do it ... oh, thank you, my dear.'

"I have found out a little about our neighbors at The Evergreens. Mrs. Campbell (who was a Pringle!) is eighty. I haven't seen her but from what I can gather she is a very grim old lady. She has a maid, Martha Monkman, almost as ancient and grim as herself, who is generally referred to as 'Mrs. Campbell's Woman.' And she has her great-granddaughter, little Elizabeth Grayson, living with her. Elizabeth ... on whom I have never laid eyes in spite of my two weeks' sojourn ... is eight years old and goes to the public school by 'the back way' ... a short cut through the back yards ... so I never encounter her, going or coming. Her mother, who is dead, was a granddaughter of Mrs. Campbell, who brought her up also ... Her parents being dead. She married a certain Pierce Grayson, a 'Yankee,' as Mrs. Rachel Lynde would say. She died when Elizabeth was born and as Pierce Grayson had to leave America at once to take charge of a branch of his firm's business in Paris, the baby was sent home to old Mrs. Campbell. The story goes that he 'couldn't bear the sight of her' because she had cost her mother's life, and has never taken any notice of her. This of course may be sheer gossip because neither Mrs. Campbell nor the Woman ever opens her lips about him.

"Rebecca Dew says they are far too strict with little Elizabeth and she hasn't much of a time of it with them.

“She isn’t like other children ... far too old for eight years. The things that she says sometimes! “Rebecca,” she sez to me one day, “suppose just as you were ready to get into bed you felt your ankle nipped?” No wonder she’s afraid to go to bed in the dark. And they make her do it. Mrs. Campbell says there are to be no cowards in her house. They watch her like two cats watching a mouse, and boss her within an inch of her life. If she makes a speck of noise they nearly pass out. It’s “hush, hush” all the time. I tell you that child is being hush-hushed to death. And what is to be done about it?’

“What, indeed?

“I feel that I’d like to see her. She seems to me a bit pathetic. Aunt Kate says she is well looked after from a physical point of view ... what Aunt Kate really said was, ‘They feed and dress her well’ ... but a child can’t live by bread alone. I can never forget what my own life was before I came to Green Gables.

“I’m going home next Friday evening to spend two beautiful days in Avonlea. The only drawback will be that everybody I see will ask me how I like teaching in Summerside.

“But think of Green Gables now, Gilbert ... the Lake of Shining Waters with a blue mist on it ... the maples across the brook beginning to turn scarlet ... the ferns golden brown in the Haunted Wood ... and the sunset shadows in Lover’s Lane, darling spot. I find it in my heart to wish I were there now with ... with ... guess whom?

“Do you know, Gilbert, there are times when I strongly suspect that I love you!”

“Windy Poplars,  
“Spook’s Lane,  
“S’ side,  
“October 10th.

“HONORED AND RESPECTED SIR: —

“That is how a love letter of Aunt Chatty’s grandmother began. Isn’t it delicious? What a thrill of superiority it must have given the grandfather! Wouldn’t you really prefer it to ‘Gilbert darling, etc.’? But, on the whole, I think I’m glad you’re not the grandfather ... or A grandfather. It’s wonderful to think we’re young and have our whole lives before us ... together ... isn’t it?”

(Several pages omitted. Anne’s pen being evidently neither sharp, stub nor rusty.)

“I’m sitting on the window seat in the tower looking out into the trees waving against an amber sky and beyond them to the harbor. Last night I had such a lovely walk with myself. I really had to go somewhere for it was just a trifle dismal at Windy Poplars. Aunt Chatty was crying in the sitting-room because her feelings had been hurt and Aunt Kate was crying in her bedroom because it was the anniversary of Captain Amasa’s death and Rebecca Dew was crying in the kitchen for no reason that I could discover. I’ve never seen Rebecca Dew cry before. But when I tried tactfully to find out what was wrong she pettishly wanted to know if a body couldn’t enjoy a cry when she felt like it. So I folded my tent and stole away, leaving her to her enjoyment.

“I went out and down the harbor road. There was such a nice frosty, October smell in the air, blent with the delightful odor of newly plowed fields. I walked on and on until twilight had deepened into a moonlit autumn night. I was alone but not lonely. I held a series of imaginary conversations with imaginary comrades and thought out so many epigrams that I was agreeably surprised at myself. I couldn’t help enjoying myself in spite of my Pringle worries.

“The spirit moves me to utter a few yowls regarding the Pringles. I hate to admit it but things are not going any too well in Summerside High. There is no doubt that a cabal has been organized against me.

“For one thing, home work is never done by any of the Pringles or half Pringles. And there is no use in appealing to the parents. They are suave, polite, evasive. I know all the pupils who are not Pringles like me but the Pringle virus of disobedience is undermining the morale of the whole room. One morning I found my desk turned inside out and upside down. Nobody knew who did it, of course. And no one could or would tell who left on it another day the box out of which popped an artificial snake when I opened it. But every Pringle in the school screamed with laughter over my face. I suppose I did look wildly startled.

“Jen Pringle comes late for school half the time, always with some perfectly watertight excuse, delivered politely, with an insolent tilt to her mouth. She passes notes in class under my very nose. I found a peeled onion in the pocket of my coat when I put it on today. I should love to lock that girl up on bread and water until she learned how to behave herself.

“The worst thing to date was the caricature of myself I found on the blackboard one morning ... done in white chalk with scarlet hair. Everybody denied doing it, Jen among the rest, but I knew Jen was the only pupil in the room who could draw like that. It was done well. My nose ... which, as you know, has always been my one pride and joy ... was humpbacked and my mouth was the mouth of a vinegary spinster who had been teaching a school full of Pringles for thirty years. But it was me. I woke up at three o'clock that night and writhed over the recollection. Isn't it queer that the things we writhe over at night are seldom wicked things? Just humiliating ones.

“All sorts of things are being said. I am accused of 'marking down' Hattie Pringle's examination papers just because she is a Pringle. I am said to 'laugh when the children make mistakes.' (Well, I did laugh when Fred Pringle defined a centurion as 'a man who had lived a hundred years.' I couldn't help it.)