

Scene Three

(The house at Green Gables)

(Enter MATTHEW and ANNE. MATTHEW hesitates, takes a deep breath.)

MATTHEW. You come right on in.

MARILLA. *(upstairs in the bedroom)* Matthew?

MATTHEW. Yes, Marilla.

(MARILLA comes downstairs.)

MARILLA. Why, Matthew Cuthbert!

MATTHEW. Yes.

MARILLA. ...Who's that?

MATTHEW. Eh?

MARILLA. Where's the boy?

MATTHEW. Oh well...well now, there wasn't any boy. There was only...her.

MARILLA. There must have been a boy. We sent word to Mrs. Spencer to bring us a boy.

MATTHEW. Well, she didn't. She brought her.

MARILLA. This is a pretty piece of business!

ANNE. *(slamming down the suitcase)* You don't want me!

You don't want me because I'm not a boy! Oh, I might have known it! *(sits in a slump at the table)*

MATTHEW. I got to water the mare. *(exits)*

MARILLA. There, there, child, there's no need to cry so!

ANNE. There is need! This is the most tragic thing that has ever happened to me!

MARILLA. Well, we're not going to throw you out of doors, tonight at any rate. Now what's your name?

ANNE. Would you please call me Cordelia?

MARILLA. Call you Cordelia? Is that your name?

ANNE. Well no, it's not exactly my name...actually it's Anne. Anne Shirley, but whenever I'm in dire anguish, I've

always imagined that my name is Cordelia. At least I always have of late years.

MARILLA. Fiddlesticks! If your name is Anne, that's what you should be called. It's a good plain sensible name, you've no need to be ashamed of it.

ANNE. Well, if you call me Anne, would you please call me Anne spelled with an "e"?

MARILLA. What difference does it make how it 's spelled?

ANNE. Oh, it looks so much nicer.

MARILLA. Very well, then, Anne with an "e," can you tell me how this mistake came to be made? We sent word to Mrs. Spencer to bring us a boy. Were there no boys at the orphanage?

ANNE. Oh yes, an abundance. But I distinctly heard Mrs. Spencer say that you wanted a girl, and the matron said she thought I'd do.

MARILLA. A girl would be of no use to us! We want a boy to help Matthew on the farm. Take your hat off over there. And help me with the table; we'll have supper.

ANNE. Oh, I couldn't eat. I'm in the depths of despair. Can you eat when you're in the depths of despair?

MARILLA. I don't know. I've never been there so I can't say.

MATTHEW. *(entering)* She's tired, Marilla. Best put her to bed.

MARILLA. Very well, child, bring your bag and come with me.

MATTHEW. Goodnight.

ANNE. How can you say it's a good night when you know it must be the very worst night I've ever had! My life is a perfect graveyard of broken hopes. *(follows MARILLA upstairs)*

MARILLA. What was that!

ANNE. That's a sentence I read in a book once and I say it to myself whenever I'm disappointed in anything.

MARILLA. You can sleep in here.

ANNE. (*flops on the bed and stares out of the window*)
OOOOOOOH!

MARILLA. Mercy, child, what's the matter?

ANNE. A tree of your very own! Imagine!

MARILLA. It's a big tree and it blooms great, but the cherries don't amount to much. Small and wormy.

ANNE. Snow Queen.

MARILLA. What?

ANNE. I'll call the tree Snow Queen, because it reminds me of the blinding vision of the White Way of Delight.

MARILLA. You've got a tongue in your head, that's for certain. Now I want you to get undressed.

ANNE. I have my best underwear on. The matron said you never know when you might get cut up in a train wreck.

MARILLA. (*looking in the suitcase*) I suppose you have a nightgown?

ANNE. I have two.

MARILLA. They look kinda flimsy. You'd best wear both of them. After you're undressed I want you to say your prayers.

ANNE. Oh, I never say any prayers.

MARILLA. Don't you know who God is?

ANNE. The matron at the orphanage told me that God is the one who made my hair red and I've never cared about Him since.

MARILLA. I'm afraid you're a very wicked little girl to talk this way. This is a Christian house and while you're in it you'll say your prayers. And when you've finished, I want you to blow out the candle. No, on second thought I'd best wait here 'til you're done. You're liable to set the house on fire.

ANNE. You may take the candle. After I'm in bed I'll imagine out a nice prayer to say.

MARILLA. No, no, child. You must kneel by your bed to pray to your Maker.

ANNE. (*kneels*) I'm ready, What do I say?

MARILLA. Uh...ah...now I lay me down to sleep. You'd best talk to the Lord in your own words, child.

ANNE. (*her voice getting deeper in tone*) I'll do my best. "Gracious heavenly Father, infinite, eternal and unchangeable..."

MARILLA. Mercy on us, what was that?

ANNE. That's the way the minister who came to the orphanage used to do it.

MARILLA. Stop your chattering and get on with your prayers. And use your own words.

ANNE. My dear God...Oh, Miss Cuthbert, even though I'm not going to stay here at Green Gables, I think I could make a much nicer prayer if I imagined that I am.

MARILLA. Never mind your imaginings. Just thank Him humbly for the blessings He has given.

ANNE. That's where I need my imagination!

[MUSIC NO. 2B: "ANNE'S PRAYER"]

Dear God,

Thank you for the White Way of Delight and the Snow Queen.

I'm really extremely grateful for them.

And that's all the blessings I can think of just now to thank You for.

As for the things I want it would take a great deal of time to mention them all, so I'll only name the two most important:

Please let me stay at Green Gables,

And please let me be good-looking when I grow up.

I remain,

Yours respectfully,

Anne Shirley.

There, did I do it alright? I could have made it much more flowery if I'd had time to think it over!