

Anne of Green Gables

Wednesday morning came. Anne got up at sunrise because she was too excited to sleep. She had caught a severe cold in the head by reason of her dabbling in the spring on the preceeding evening, but nothing short of absolute pneumonia could have quenched her interest in culinary matters that morning. After breakfast she proceeded to make her cake. When she finally shut the oven door upon it, she drew a long breath.

“I’m sure I haven’t forgotten anything this time, Marilla. But do you think it will rise? Just supposed perhaps the baking powder isn’t good? I used it out of the new can. And Mrs. Lynde says you can never be sure of getting good baking powder nowadays when everything is so adulterated. Mrs. Lynde says the government ought to take the matter up, but she says we’ll never see the day when a Tory government will do it. Marilla, what if that cake doesn’t rise?”

“We’ll have plenty without it,” was Marilla’s unimpassioned way of looking at the subject.

The cake did rise however, and came out of the oven as light and feathery as golden foam. Anne, flushed with delight, clapped it together with layers of ruby jelly and, in imagination, saw Mrs. Allan eating it and possibly asking for another piece!

“You’ll be using the best tea-set, of course, Marilla,” she said. “Can I fix up the table with ferns and wild roses?”

“I think that’s all nonsense,” sniffed Marilla. “In my opinion it’s

the eatables that matter and not flummery decorations.”

“Mrs. Barry had *her* table decorated,” said Anne, who was not entirely guiltless of the wisdom of the serpent, “and the minister paid her an elegant compliment. He said it was a feast for the eye as well as the palate.”

“Well, do as you like,” said Marilla, who was quite determined not to be surpassed by Mrs. Barry or anybody else. “Only mind you leave enough room for the dishes and the food.”

Anne laid herself out to decorate in a manner and after a fashion that should leave Mrs. Barry’s nowhere. Having an abundance of roses and ferns and a very artistic taste of her own, she made that tea table such a thing of beauty that as the mMinister and his wife sat down to it they exclaimed in chorus of its loveliyness.

“It’s Anne’s doings,” said Marilla, grimly just; and Anne felt that Mrs. Allan’s approving smile was almost too much happiness for this world. Matthew was there, having been inveigled in to the party, only goodness and Anne knew how. He had been in such a state of shyness and nervousness that Marilla had given him up in despair, but Anne took him in hand so successfully that he now sat at the table in his best clothes and white collar and talked to the minister not uninterestingly. He never said a word to Mrs. Allan, but that perhaps was not to be expected.