

TELL ANNE OF GREEN GABLES, IN 500 WORDS OR LESS,  
WHAT SHE MEANS TO YOU.



100  
YEARS OF  
ANNE

*Dear Anne Shirley,*

*My dear Anne with an "e". The ancient Greeks believed that true friendship was one soul inhabiting two bodies. The kinship I feel to you rings of a similar chord indeed. My appreciation for you began as a boy of 10, secretly basking in the hilarity of your antics, quietly dreaming of the striking beauty of your island. Mine was a silent enjoyment, though, your tales were not nearly plebeian enough for a rural boy of those years. How I cheered you as you recited *The Highwayman*, while I, gender-caged, was relegated to the likes of Frost and Whitman.*

*Parallel lines indeed are the avenues we have travelled, dear Anne. Like you, I am an orphan, though not so early in life as you. My mother could have been Marilla's own blood kin. She did, in her own way, love me through gritted teeth and between lectures on my inadequacies. But you, Anne, at least you received acceptance and the blessed closure of affirmation. I envy you. Your experience of grace gives me hope, though, and it prompts me to do better. My father was the very image of your Matthew: quiet and gray, he was a hard-working man who lived in the harness. I cradled him as he passed from this life as you did Matthew in that glorious, swaying, green pasture. I cried when both men died. You showed me that it was all right to do so.*

*Ours is a shared circle of friends, Anne. Loyal and fickle, your Gilbert and Diana were my Jim and Susan, Rachel was an old biddy named Sophie. But you were so right. Josie Pye will always be Josie Pye. As for me, I was always more stringbean than carrots.*

*Your keen, curious eye encouraged me to ask and to express, friend Anne. Your striving to rise above circumstances pushed me to imagine, create and compete. Kindred spirits, you and I? Oh, I know, people these days huff and puff the words about like so much dandelion fluff. But we are much alike, you and I, born out of loss, enduring our share of bitter adversity, taking sweet consolation in the comforting touch of others. Like you, I reside in a deep, emerald woodland, a place to walk and think, full of clear birdsong and the lonely calls of nightcrawlers.*

*Yours has been a rich life, Anne Shirley, a big journey for such a small girl. We have borne witness to your life, a potent mix of passion, curiosity and imagination. You're a true romantic, Anne, an authentic friend and confidante. Your smile makes the grass greener, the blossoms more beautiful, the waters more sparkling and the sky more azure than sapphire. By your example, you inspire me to be and to do better. I am the better for knowing you, Anne Shirley, and from a heart that has laughed and cried, that has known brokenness and fulfillment, I thank you for sharing that amazing life with me.*

*Until such time as we speak again, I remain your bosom friend and true kindred spirit.*

*Bill*