

ANNE THEN SOME

by Allison L. Fradkin

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“Anne Then Some” / Fradkin

SYNOPSIS

You are raspberry cordially invited to Prince Edward Island, home of carrot-top-of-the-line literary heroine Anne Shirley and her bosom friend Diana Barry. These kindred spirits have some contemporary company: Vernie and Cori, teenage visitors who meet for the first time while having a field day at Field Day at Green Gables Heritage Place. A three-legged race enables the girls to get closer than the pleats in Anne’s pigtail braids, but is it love at first “site”? Anne and Diana solemnly swear their faithfulness to one another within minutes of meeting. Will Vernie and Cori duplicate their devotion?

CHARACTERS

CORI

a 16-year-old girl
in terms of personality:
a contemporary Anne Shirley

VERNIE

a 16-year-old girl
in terms of personality:
a contemporary Diana Barry

SETTING

Green Gables Heritage Place, Prince Edward Island, Canada.

TIME

Summer, presently.

Running Time: 10 minutes

Production History: No previous productions, but will be presented as a staged reading by Queer Theatre Kalamazoo in June of 2019.

At rise, VERNIE and CORI, arms across each other's shoulders and a scrunchie uniting their ankles, bumble around a picnic table while practicing for a three-legged race.

CORI

Here's a question for you: If Megan follows, who leads?

VERNIE

Um... Shoot. I can never remember the actress who plays Diana Barry.

CORI

Clearly, Megan Follows doesn't live up to her name. Which is why her portrayal of our carrot-top-of-the-line literary heroine remains unquestionably unfollowable.

VERNIE

She may be stretching the truth, Cori, but you are stretching my scrunchie.

CORI

I don't follow. Now perk up and pick up the pace. There's only one sure way to have a field day on Field Day, and that's to come out on top. Yes, I know Anne Shirley said, "Next to trying and winning, the best thing is trying and failing." But she only arrived at that conclusion after achieving a modicum of maturity. We're not there yet.

VERNIE

How did I get roped into this?

CORI

You were on my side during the tug-of-war. Naturally, I needed you at my side for the three-legged race.

VERNIE

You're sure it's not because I'm the only other participant who doesn't require a grown-up to hold their hand when they cross the street?

CORI

All right, fine, you got me. And I got you by putting on the pressure.

VERNIE

Yeah, the peer pressure.

CORI

Well, you had the peer part covered so perfectly. You were delightfully—and disturbingly—pliable.

(Amused by Vernie's affronted expression, Cori responds in a sing-song voice, to the tune of "Happy Birthday to You":)

You act like a scrunchie, and you look like one too.

VERNIE

If anyone asks how I spent my summer vacation, I'll say I was a yellow-bellied visitor at Green Gables, in a gray area with an off-color companion.

CORI

Gray area, huh? Are you experiencing feelings of ambivalence? Usually when people develop a love/hate thing for me, it's in the context of either/or. I've never met someone who felt torn.

VERNIE

I find it hard to believe no one's ever gotten attached to you before. I mean—

(Vernie's verbal stumble results in an actual fall, during which her passport tumbles out of her pocket.)

CORI

Hey, our passport to victory!

VERNIE

If you don't give that back this instant, Cori, I swear—

CORI

Don't you dare. "It's dreadfully wicked to swear," Diana would hasten to chasten you.

(A comical tussle ensues, complete with improvised exclamations and protestations. Cori emerges the victor, whereupon she opens the passport and flips to the identity page.)

CORI

Jeepers, gadzooks, and egads. Your full name is Laverne Anne Shirley? Well, that does it. I'm in love.

VERNIE

And the recipient of that love would be...?

CORI

Your government name, obviously. For further clarification, it was love at first site. Site with an E. It's much more distinguished that way. Green Gables Heritage Place, to be site-specific. Wait a second, how can your name be Laverne when... Ohhh, you introduced yourself as Vernie. I thought you said your name was Bernie, as in Bernadette. While we're on the subject of introductions, I demand to meet your folks.

VERNIE

Why?

CORI

Thanks to them, you are an amalgamation sensation. All mine ever called me was Cordelia.

VERNIE

That's Anne's dream name.

CORI

Isn't yours...yours?

VERNIE

It looks good on paper, but it sounds like a rejected Before-and-After puzzle on Wheel of Fortune. My mom said she picked it in case I turned out shy like her. She figured a name like that would make an exquisite conversation starter.

CORI

You were conversing pretty exquisitely when we were on a nickname basis.

VERNIE

Yeah, well, you started it. It's always easier when someone else makes the first move. Hey, maybe I should go by L.A.

CORI

When? On your way to the gift shop?

VERNIE

I'm talking about Lucy Maud Montgomery, better known as L.M. Montgomery.

CORI

L.M.? Okay. L.A.? N-O. You're from [locale about an hour away from the one in which the play is presented].

VERNIE

You expect me to take labeling advice from a person who goes by Cori when their name is Cordelia?

CORI

You try telling tourists and Prince Edward Islanders that your name is Cordelia. First, they look at you as if you burgled their beloved brooch. Then, after you've provided proof of your identity, they fawn all over you as if you're a dress with puffed sleeves. It gets old after a while.

VERNIE

I thought you liked old things.

CORI

I do.

VERNIE

In fact, one might say your tastes are positively Anne-tiquated.

CORI

Must you be so excruciatingly winsome?

(returns Vernie's passport)

Also, it would help if you were homely. Or at least slightly unsightly. If you blush any harder, Vernie, your face will be redder than the maple leaf on the Canadian flag. You look like you could use a drink.

(produces a flask from her pocket)

Another facial faux pas? Now your eyes are wider than embroidery hoops. Want a sip? Flask, and you shall receive. Don't worry—it's not currant wine.

VERNIE

You're offering me expired intoxicants?

CORI

Currant wine is what Anne gave Diana by accident instead of raspberry cordial, remember?

VERNIE

I remember. I just forgot. What exactly are you giving me on purpose?

CORI

Raspberry cordial.

(Vernie takes the flask, then a sniff and a sip of its contents.)

VERNIE

Oh.

CORI

What impressed you more? My veracity or my audacity?

VERNIE

The latter, I guess. Is flask ownership common among teenagers where you're from?

CORI

Not only is it customary for the young adults of [locale in which the play is presented] to carry shiny silver containers whose contents are "tee-totally" safe to consume; it is compulsory. Seriously, though, it makes me feel thoroughly bad and wicked, all without having to compromise my squeaky-cleanliness.

VERNIE

You're from [locale in which the play is presented]? That's not unreasonably far from [locale about an hour away from the one in which the play is presented].

CORI

Well, I wouldn't want to get too close.

VERNIE

Good, because I wouldn't want to go too far. Did that come out wrong?

CORI

Is there a wrong way to come out? Probably. I wouldn't know. I do everything right. And I do nothing by the book. Except, you know, for the one that brings me here, year after year.

VERNIE

How long have you been coming out here?

CORI

Oh, this is my first time. But I've been coming here every summer since I was eleven. I'm now in the sixth year of my routine.

VERNIE

So one might say your visits are an Anne-ual occurrence.

CORI

There you go again, facilitating my tourist attraction.

VERNIE

I...didn't mean to intoxicate you?

CORI

You didn't?

VERNIE

Did I? I... Wow, Green Gables is super green. Have you ever noticed that? It has, like, every shade imaginable: gumball green, Girl Scout green, stuffed Stegosaurus green. I'm green too in a way, because I'm new here. This trip was a sweet sixteenth birthday present from my parents. Do you still want to meet them? Maybe later. They're probably still on their nature walk.

CORI

Lover's Lane or the Haunted Wood Trail? If they're on the Haunted Wood Trail, there's a really good chance that my folks will scare them off. They're not ominous or anything. Just clamorous—they like to sing. And amorous—they love their love songs.

VERNIE

My parents are on the same trail, but a different wavelength. They'd never disturb the peace. They're...delightfully and disturbingly peaceful. Like, um, me.

CORI

Awww, the Shirleys spawned a mini Matthew Cuthbert. In terms of temperament, I meant.