

Anne's Dreams Come True



Dulci Daily



An "Adult Tv" Novel



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ANNE'S DREAMS COME TRUE

by Dulci Daily

Chapter 1

God's in his heaven; a few things, at least, are right with the world!

It was far from the most sublime of sentiments, but it was the best Anne Oglestone could do. She had not the advantages of the “real” Anne, her beloved Anne of Green Gables, Avonlea, the Island, Windy Poplars, her House of Dreams, and Ingleside, in that order. She did not live surrounded by the beauty of nature in a country village on a secluded island, in a quieter, simpler time, as the real Anne did—and her husband was not the admirable Gilbert Blythe. She could never bring herself to say, as the real Anne once had said, that *all* was right with the world.

Still, at least today, Anne could see some genuine goodness in the world. The beauty spread forth below the big bay window of her parkside home still had power to cheer her heart, though the sky was pale and overcast as usual in Pacific Heights, and it had

been raining. Queen Charlotte Park, covering the steep side of Queen's Bluff, was filled with late summer's green leaves on many trees, dancing and mingling and showing forth glory. A rare few of them gave the first hint that soon all their leaves would turn to every evanescent hue, then fall down and die, while the tall, strong, changeless evergreens stood over them as always. Beyond the park, Anne could see the gray-green ocean all the way to Point Ransom Light-house and beyond, reflecting the measureless infinity of the sky above.

Best of all by far, Anne today had welcomed a kindred spirit into her home, and the kindred spirit's two little children too. Caring for widows and orphans was a Christian's duty, of course, but this was no mere duty. Indeed, it was so delightful to lend a helping hand to Jeannette Hearthward and her offspring, the bright, vivacious seven-year-old Vickie and the wide-eyed almost one-year-old Winston, that it seemed hardly consistent with strict duty!

Jeannette's husband, Anne was thinking with every beat of her heart, had been a most fortunate man while he lived. Even for mere outward beauty, Anne had hardly ever seen Jeannette's equal. The young widow's dark eyes, almost matching her deep mahogany-colored hair, seemed to have kept the innocent glow of childhood, along with the shy but ardent radiance of maidenhood. Her plump, ruddy cheeks and her full, wide lips were such as could only grow more and more delightful, for a husband to see and to kiss, as the years made them ever more familiar. Her figure, not too plump to be pleasing, but full of all the womanly curvature that Anne completely lacked, was so delightful to view even when fully clothed that Anne dared not imagine a husband's greater delight in seeing and doing more. Jeannette's loveliness even evoked Anne's memories of long-ago days when she had fancied herself bisexual—dreadfully dangerous memories, now that Anne was married to a man.

Yet all this beauty paled, Anne thought, compared to the beauty of Jeannette's bright soul. Anne had seen living devotion, both to God and man, when she delicately evoked Jeannette's memories of her departed husband Andrew, and her unfailing hope that Andrew was at home with God. Anne had seen a mother's kindness to her beloved children, and a

mother's wisdom in answering Vickie's unheard-of, imaginative questions (with some much-appreciated help from Anne herself). Anne had seen, too, this newly lonely woman's tender hope for deep, enduring friendship with Anne herself—undaunted by the knowledge that Anne was not, as she seemed to be, a woman quite like Jeannette.

"Would you like to go down into the park for a bit when we've finished our tea?" Anne asked from her seat on one side of the bay window. "I think it's starting to clear up." She took a sip of tea from one of her finest china cups, a delicate white one embossed with twin roses of real gold, given to her by her husband Richard, known to the world as Richard Oglestone, M.D.

"Oh, yes!" Jeannette said at once from the seat on the other side. "I'm sure Vickie would love to run around in the park for a little while before we go home. And, you know—well, the park is a proper enough place for conversation, but I'm not sure Andrew would have approved of me visiting a *man* alone in his house." She giggled a bit, but soon stopped. "But of course everything's been perfectly decent," she hastened to add, "and you don't really seem like a man at all, Anne!" Vickie was staring at Anne, obviously in silent agreement.

"Well, there's a reason for that," Anne said with a smile. Really, she knew, there were multiple reasons, from the top of her head to the tips of her toes. Anne's hair, as long and as red as the real Anne's so-called "auburn" hair, was woven into two long, neat braids—giving her, at fully 32 years of age, such girlish looks as the real Anne had tried to eschew as soon as she could. Her soft blue eyes could show as much feminine kindness and delight as the real Anne's eyes; her full, red, womanly lips could smile as warmly and captivatingly as the real Anne's lips. Her small, firm, well-formed bosoms, though false, were of such a fetching shape as she imagined the real Anne's bosoms must have had when she was a maiden or a young wife, although of course they were *not* described in the books. Her slender figure was only delicately suggested by her loose floral-print blouse and her long sky-blue skirt, below which her silk stockings (another gift from Richard) and her sensible, low-heeled black pumps peeked out. But as

for that which modesty conceals (as old Don Quixote would have gallantly said), modesty did well to conceal it very thoroughly indeed. The sight of it—especially now, when hardened, heated, and elongated to its full five inches under the influence of Jeannette's most evident desirability—would have shocked anyone who might have imagined Anne to be a real woman.

“But actually, if you'd like to know,” Anne confided, “my real name is Andrew, like your—your husband's name.”

Jeannette said nothing, but little Vickie knew well what “Andrew” and “your husband” meant. “Mommy, when is Daddy coming home?” she asked at once.

Jeannette sighed and bit her lip. “Honey, I told you before, Daddy went to Heaven,” she said. “We'll go see him sometime, but we'll have to wait until God takes us there because we can't go there on our own.” Vickie's daddy, Anne knew from Jeannette, had been summoned to Heaven by way of an abrupt and disastrous earthly event, a collision with a massive, impregnable SUV driven by a drunk.

Anne looked intently into the little girl's dark, wondering eyes in the midst of her round milk-chocolate-colored face, a heritage from her West Indian father whose picture Jeannette had shown to Anne. She smiled at Vickie, and received a most delightful smile in return. “Can't Daddy come back from Heaven to visit?” Vickie asked.

Again Jeannette sighed. “I'm not sure,” she ventured to say. “But it's really better to be in Heaven. Daddy probably wants to wait for us to come there.”

“Mrs. Oglestone,” Vickie abruptly asked Anne, “would you like to come to Heaven and see Daddy too?”

“I certainly would, at the right time,” Anne affirmed with almost no hesitation, “and of course I'd like to see you and your mommy, and Winston there too.” She looked at Vickie with love, and thought of how delightful it must be to be Vickie's mother.

“Oh, good!” Vickie cried. “I'd like to see *you* there too!” The little girl's affectionate heart overflowed into

a hug for Anne, who pressed Vickie tenderly to her own heart and caressed her close-curved black hair.

“Dear God,” Vickie promptly prayed after the end of the hug, “please take Mommy and me, and Mrs. Oglestone, to Heaven to be with Daddy! And Winston too,” she added as an afterthought. Anne looked at Winston, oblivious to thoughts of Daddy and Heaven, but not to Anne’s smiling face. He smiled back at her, and then laughed, as her eyes silently spoke the universal language of love for babies.

“Honey, God will take us there,” Jeannette assured her. “We just need to be patient. It might take a long time, but He will. Now, while we’re waiting, how would you like to go out and play in the park for a little while?”

“All right,” Vickie agreed. “After that, can we go to Heaven and see Daddy?”

“It’s all up to God,” Jeannette said. “He loves us very much, and He knows when is the right time for us to go to Heaven.”

Anne finished her tea quickly, so as not to delay the excursion to the park. Jeannette strapped Winston into the little stroller in which he had arrived. Then she pushed the stroller on one side and Vickie pushed it on the other, while Anne led the way to the miniature elevator, a feature not found in many other older homes on the seaward side of Queen’s Bluff.

“Wow, this is great, an elevator in your own house!” Jeannette exclaimed.

“Yes, my husband loves gadgets,” said Anne. She didn’t mention that sometimes she wondered what else, if anything, her husband loved, other than gadgets, money, medical achievements, and now politics. She surmised that he probably did still love *her*, although sometimes it was hard to tell.

“He’s a doctor, isn’t he?” Jeannette asked as the elevator descended. “I’ve seen the ads for Dr. Richard Oglestone. He’s your husband, right?”

“Yes, he is. He’s doing quite well in his profession.” *Quite well enough to have adopted children by now,*

Anne thought with a well-concealed grimace, if he really had any interest in it as he used to tell Anne he did.

“Andrew was doing really well in his profession, too,” Jeannette said, pushing the stroller out of the elevator. “He was driving back from a high-powered academic conference in California, where he delivered a big paper, when—it happened.” She meant the fatal crash, of course.

“You seem to be taking it, uh, quite well, quite bravely,” Anne said, drawing close to Jeannette and speaking softly, as they left the house and entered the park after a moment of walking in silence.

“I’m not,” Jeannette said at once. Anne looked at her, just in time to see her starting to cry. “Oh, Anne,” Jeannette confided, “I’d cry myself to sleep every night, if only I could *get* to sleep! If I could never hope to see him again, I couldn’t bear it!”

Anne felt a deep stab of pity for her new friend, tinged with a touch of self-pity. She did not think she would respond like this if Richard died. She did not like to think how she would respond, barely seven years now since her dream of marrying Richard had come true—since she had vowed to love, honor, and cherish Richard “until death do us part.”

She forced her thoughts to return to Jeannette, despite her fear of the growing danger. Soon they flew to what the real Anne (a Presbyterian) used to call “predestination,” but Anne Oglestone (an Episcopalian) preferred to call “providence.” Not long ago, Jeannette and her husband Andrew had been no more than acquaintances of Anne and Richard, saying hello after church and not much more. Today, in the mysterious designs of providence, the newly widowed Jeannette bade fair to become Anne’s dearest friend—if not more than a friend, something Anne would be ashamed even to imagine. Anne raised up a quick, fervent prayer to the Almighty to make her worthy of such a friend, and to help her overcome all temptations to unfaithfulness—no matter how strong, and even how overwhelming, they might become.

“Jeannette,” Anne murmured, drawing very close, “I know no one and nothing can take your Andrew’s

place, but—if there’s anything I can do for you, no matter what or when, please let me know. I’ll help you in any way I can.” The hot, hard elongation modestly concealed beneath her skirt, and the fast-beating heart not nearly so well concealed beneath her blouse, united in whispering to Anne that she might well wish to take Andrew’s place someday after all, if only she were not married to Richard. She tried to ignore the frightful, wrongful whispering, but she lacked the will to reject it out of hand.

Jeannette’s eyes opened as wide as Winston’s. “Anne, thank you!” she said. “You’re so kind! I wish there was some way I could help you too!”

“Oh, there is,” Anne assured her. “I’m sure there is. We’ll just have to see what it is, in the mysterious designs of providence.” She could not think that providence might have such mysterious, unheard-of designs as to break up her marriage with Richard and give her to Jeannette—and yet she was finding it terribly hard to think of anything else.

“Anne!” Richard called out at once when he walked through the front door.

“I’m here,” Anne answered from her study. She put down her electronic tablet, yet another gift from Richard, on which she had been reading a book—not one of the Anne books, for she had those largely memorized, but a non-fiction book about widowhood.

“Anne, I’ve got lots of great news,” Richard told her after they embraced and kissed. The kiss was long and lingering, with Richard’s tongue entering deep into Anne’s mouth, and his hands caressing her slender hips. From the unusual warmth of these events, almost reminiscent of the early days of their marriage, Anne wondered whether Richard wished to reveal that which modesty conceals, and wished her to do so too. It had been too long since they had united, Anne felt, and her visit with Jeannette had given her a new and urgent motive for seeking release with Richard. Her elongation rose to the occasion, and she began to return Richard’s ardor with interest.

No sooner had she done so, however, than the long kiss ended and the real causes of Richard's excitement became apparent. "Our new TV commercial is ready to show," he informed her, "and it's terrific! Come on and look!" He whipped out an unmarked DVD and walked toward the living room; Anne dutifully followed. He inserted the DVD in the player, sat down on the sofa with the remote in his right hand, and beckoned to Anne with his left; she appropriately sat down beside him, and he put his arm around her. She did not place her hand upon his manly member, as she had been contemplating.

The commercial began, rather loudly and even shockingly. "Bitch tits!" shouted a boy from the midst of a big crowd of what appeared to be high-school students. "Wow, look at those man-boobs!" a girl cried out to the laughing crowd. A deep-voiced boy, imitating the sound of a cow, moaned over and over: "Moobs! Mooobbs! Moooooooobbs!" The victim of this verbal abuse, a fat boy wearing a tight, form-fitting shirt that plainly displayed his enlarged breasts and protruding nipples, walked the gauntlet between two lines of abusers, with his face growing redder and angrier as he walked. Quickly the crowd began to sing a simple, catchy tune with repetitive, memorable words: "Call the Moob Doc, Moob Doc, Moob Doc! Call the Moob Doc now!" The victim's face became redder and angrier than it could ever have been in real life, as it filled the entire screen.

Abruptly the scene changed to show the tall, handsome, broad-shouldered, only slightly stout Richard in a white coat, radiating maximum medical authority from his round, handsome face. "Millions of American men," Richard said, "suffer from male breast enlargement, medically known as *gynecomastia*, commonly called "man-boobs" or simply "moobs." This easily correctible condition can lead to acute and prolonged embarrassment, or worse—*far worse*."

For a few brief seconds, which seemed much longer, an extremely shocking scene flashed onto the screen. The victim was now in the nude. His face was distorted in what seemed quite like horror and anguish. A man with his face hidden was grasping the victim's breasts from behind and making quick, rhythmic pumping motions, while two other men gripped the victim's arms and held him still.

Anne shuddered. She felt sure the actors were simulating violent rectal abuse, though of course no penetration was actually shown. She could never condone the showing of such a thing, even in simulation—and she was not sure she would find it easy to forgive Richard for showing it. Her elongation had diminished to minimum size.

“I’m Dr. Richard Oglestone, known as the Moob Doc,” Richard said in the commercial when the presumed rectal abuse had vanished. “I’m the leading specialist in MBRS, male breast reduction surgery, in the State of Pacificum, and I can help. Call me for a free initial consultation at 987-MOOB, that’s 987-6662, or visit www.moobdocofpacificum.com.” The phone number and the website address were shown in glowing golden letters near the bottom of the screen. Above, a sailboat floated on a moonlit sea, while a smooth-voiced crooner, accompanied by a harp, sang the simple song again: “Call the Moob Doc, Moob Doc, Moob Doc! Call the Moob Doc now!” In the sailboat sat the erstwhile victim, now fully clothed and smiling, gazing steadfastly upon his destination ahead. As he sailed, his big breasts swiftly, magically grew smaller. When he reached the shore, at the word “now,” he seemed to have no breasts at all any more.

That was the end. “Isn’t that great?” Richard rhetorically asked Anne.

“Ah—it’s very well done, and very attention-getting,” Anne cautiously said. “But are you sure it was wise to put in the part that showed—er—violent abuse?”

“I’m positive,” Richard declared. “That’s essential. Prospective patients have to face grim reality and see what can happen if they don’t get the surgery. And it’s not only prospective patients, Anne, it’s the legislature. We’ve got a serious chance of getting MBRS coverage included as preventive care in the state health insurance plan. To do that, we’ve got to push the right buttons and show what this surgery can prevent. That includes bullying, including extreme bullying and sexual abuse like you saw in the commercial, plus depression, panic attacks, obesity, drug abuse, sex addiction, gender identity confusion, poor performance in school, suicide, and school violence. You know that sledgehammer attack last

month in the parking lot at Rutland Ridge High School? That was moob-related. The perp was a big fat kid who got fed up with the teasing about his moobs, so he bashed a couple of teasers' heads in. Horrible tragedy, of course, but it came at a perfect time to draw attention to the need for MBRS coverage, which could have *prevented* the tragedy."

Richard drew Anne closer to himself and spoke to her most earnestly. "And you know, Anne," he said, "if MBRS coverage becomes part of the state plan, we're going to be rich—rich beyond our wildest dreams!"

Anne wished Richard could not see her face, but he was holding her too close and too tightly for her to turn away. She stared at him and did not smile, though her mouth was open. She thought they were already quite rich enough; she had no wildest dreams of wealth to become rich beyond, as he could surely see. She wanted to ask him, "Will we be rich enough to adopt children *then?*"—but she did not dare, for she knew he would become offended, and she was pretty sure she already knew what would be his answer.

"And that's not the only great news I've got," Richard went on. "We made the cut for poster couple! We beat the Runciples in the final round! We're in!"

Not everyone, perhaps, would have known what this meant, but Anne did. The State of Pacificum's liberal laws accepting same-sex marriage were under attack by fundamentalist fanatics led by the infamous Bob Stimson IV, promoting "Initiative 491." If passed, Initiative 491 would redefine marriage as one man plus one woman only, and that wasn't all. It would force same-sex married couples either to end their marriages, or (if they preferred) to redefine their marriage contracts as mere "homosexual service contracts."

The existing law's defenders were seeking a same-sex "poster couple" to appear in a pre-election barrage of photo ads and signs bearing the caption "DON'T BREAK UP THIS HAPPY MARRIAGE! VOTE NO ON 491!" Anne and Richard, a beautiful, feminine-looking gay cross-dresser and a handsome, prominent, masculine-looking gay physician, who were married in one of the most gay-friendly

churches in the Anglican Communion if not in the world, were a natural choice. Their opponents in the final round had been Jim and Joe Runciple, two totally manly gay guys who had adopted three boys. Anne had wished the Runciples would win.

“Oh, I’m sorry for the Runciples,” Anne gently said. “They seem like such nice, intelligent men, and they’ve really done a lot for their boys.”

“Yeah, but that’s not what will sell the voters on defeating 491,” Richard said. “The undecided voters would see two masculine-looking guys who sure wouldn’t look like a real married couple to *them*, and they’d think the guys adopted the boys to molest them. That’s not the ticket at all. You and I are the ticket, Anne. We’ll look like a real married couple to the undecided voters. Imagine how heartbreaking it would be to even think of breaking up Anne and Gilbert Blythe in the books and the movies!”

Anne sighed, and dared to speak. “Anne and Gilbert had *children* after they were married,” she said, so softly she was not sure Richard could hear.

He could. He was not pleased. “Anne, we’ve been through all this before,” he said, meaning that he had repeatedly refused to adopt children whenever Anne brought the subject up. “I’ve considered it fully and fairly, and it just wouldn’t work. We need to drop the subject. It’s not something that should come between us.”

Anne grimaced in pain. Richard meant they would *never* adopt children. He had lied, he had misled her into hoping for children. Now she would never have them, at least until Richard died—or their marriage did.

Anne frowned, clenched her thin fists, and set her slender jaw. She had vowed to be a devoted wife to Richard until death, and she would go through with it. She would even smile brightly in the photos, so convincingly that no one would even imagine their marriage might not be as happy as it seemed.

“When and where are we going to be photographed?” she asked.

“On Sunday at St. Austin’s, after church.” St. Austin’s, on Queen’s Boulevard near the highest point of the bluff, was the church that Anne and Richard attended each Sunday, the church where they had been married seven years ago.

“Very well, then,” said Anne. “I’ll wear my Sunday best, and smile my brightest smile.”

“That’s more like it,” Richard said, giving her a smile, if not his brightest, and squeezing her shoulder.

“That’s my Anne-girl.”

Anne swallowed hard and tried to get up, but Richard held her down. “One more little thing, Anne,” he said, caressing her almost tenderly. “I really think you need to start the hormone treatments soon. I’ve been pretty patient with your misgivings, but you know how much it would please me to see you, and feel you, with a more feminine shape above the waist.”

He had touched one of Anne’s sore spots, and he knew it, but he didn’t know it was sorer now than ever. Anne would have thought it glorious to have real “moobs,” real breasts, if God had given them to her. It hurt her heart to think of gynecomastic men, who did have such lovely gifts from God, being insulted and abused for them, and deciding they must throw them away by getting surgery from Richard. But Anne still thought a doctor should devote himself to saving life and health, not to flattering vanity by either shrinking or enlarging breasts.

So Anne had long thought, before she had ever known Richard, much less known that male breast reduction surgery was to be Richard’s specialty—but now there were new, more painful thoughts as well. Richard had prodded her to inflate her flat chest with hormones, to seem to have a mother’s lovely breasts, only seconds after he had shattered her hope of motherhood forever! Anne could bear much from Richard—she had borne much, and no doubt would bear much more—but this she could not bear.

“Richard,” Anne said, more coldly than she had ever spoken to him before, “we’ve been through all this before. I’ve considered it fully and fairly, and it

just wouldn't work. We need to drop the subject. It's not something that should come between us."

Anne feared Richard would take it as a slap in the face, or worse, to hear her using his exact words against him like this. He took it as worse. She could see outrage leaping from his eyes like fire from a gun barrel. Soon, however, he forced himself under control and spoke almost calmly: "Very well, then. We won't discuss it any more. It must not come between us. There's something far bigger than either of us at stake here." He meant the need to defeat Initiative 491, of course.

"Let's both cool off," Richard said, letting Anne go and arising at once. "We need it."

About that, at least, Richard was surely right. Anne, though trembling so hard with anger that she feared her knees would buckle beneath her, arose and made her way back to her study. There, at once, she returned to her book about widowhood.

Chapter 2

"O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come," Anne sang with the congregation and the choir at the conclusion of the church service, "our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home!"

It was a glorious Sunday, with sunlight turning the stained-glass windows into many-splendored gates of Heaven. The grand old hymn lifted Anne's thoughts to Heaven too. She was glad St. Austin's had kept so many of the old traditions, while modifying them somewhat in the matter of marriage.

She and Richard walked out of the church hand-in-hand, smiling and waving at other parishioners, approaching the waiting photographer. Next to the photographer stood the well-known David Cognosco, president of the Pacificum Society for the Defense of Marriage, the leader of the campaign to defeat Initiative 491 and protect same-sex marriage.

"Richard, congratulations; it's great to see you," said David, shaking Richard's hand. "Anne, congratulations; I'm so glad to see you." He shook her hand

too. "You two could really turn out to make the difference between success and failure in this all-important campaign."

"I sure hope we'll make a positive difference," Richard said, "and I know Anne does too." Anne smiled and said nothing.

"OK, let's see you over here in front of the church," David said. "Terry," he told the photographer, "let's have a choice of plenty of shots of this happily married church-going couple, and make sure it's obvious that they just came out of church. Anne, keep that straw hat just where you've got it; it's perfect. That dress with the big, bright-colored flowers is perfect, too; you're looking absolutely lovely. Now get close together and give us your greatest smiles."

Anne and Richard complied. The photographer took what seemed to be a great many pictures—of course no more suggestive of gay sex than the Anne books were suggestive of the marital intimacy presumably enjoyed by Anne and Gilbert after their marriage—before David told him to stop. "OK, now," said David, "we'll go over these ASAP and pick the very best. We want to get these pictures out in front of the undecided voters as soon as we can."

"Great," said Richard. "Let us know if you want us to speak or anything too. We'll go all out for the future of marriage in Pacificum." He had not consulted Anne before volunteering her to speak with him, but she hoped perhaps she would not really be called upon.

"That's exactly what I like to hear," David said. "I'll be in touch." He shook Richard's and Anne's hands again before departing with the photographer.

"Wow, congratulations," Jeannette said after David left and Anne told her what the photos were for. "That's quite an honor, isn't it?" Vickie, holding Jeannette's hand, looked up at Anne and said nothing.

"Much more to Richard than to me, I'm sure," said Anne. "He's the famous doctor; I'm just the nice-looking stay-at-home wife."

"That's not what people will think after they hear Anne speak, I bet," Richard said to Jeannette. "She's

got brains, and she knows how to use them. I can hardly wait to hear her speak out against Initiative 491.” Anne was thinking he would wait much longer than expected, but she made no reply.

“I’m afraid my husband Andrew would have spoken out in *favor* of it, if he were—uh—still here,” Jeannette admitted. “He was really shocked when he first found out they were going to have same-sex marriages in the Episcopal church here. The Anglicans didn’t have that where he came from. He came from one of the leading families in Jamaica; they always insisted that everything had to be done with strict propriety, and that meant no same-sex marriages.”

“Well, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*,” said Richard. “That’s Latin for ‘if you can’t say anything good about dead people, don’t say anything.’”

Jeannette’s jaw dropped, although she lifted it almost at once. Anne’s jaw did not drop, because she was clenching her teeth. Richard had shocked her again, this time with his tastelessness and thoughtlessness in suggesting that nothing good could be said about a dead man who would have supported Initiative 491 had he still been alive.

“I’m sure there are many good things to say about Andrew,” Anne said with a bit less gentleness than was her custom, “even if he wouldn’t have agreed with us about everything.”

“Oh, yes, he was a—a wonderful husband, even if he was pretty old-fashioned in some ways,” Jeannette said, seeming a bit afraid of Richard. Vickie looked up at Richard and frowned; then she looked back to her mother.

Richard took a deep breath, which obviously would have been a yawn if he had not wished to seem polite, and let it out silently. “Well,” he said, “why don’t you and Anne say some good things about him to each other, then, and I’ll relax for a bit. We’re going to be extra busy until the election, and I want to go at it refreshed.”

“All right, you get some nice rest while Jeannette and I go for a picnic lunch in the park,” Anne

promptly said. She didn't ask him if he was sure he didn't want to come along.

“Jeannette, please let me apologize for Richard's thoughtless words to you,” Anne said almost as soon as they had sat down at a picnic table and begun their lunch. Vickie, pleasingly plump like Jeannette, seemed at first to give her whole attention to maintaining her plumpness by way of her lunch. Winston, modestly covered by a shawl, received his own lunch from Jeannette's ample breast.

“Richard,” Anne said, “is getting too carried away with this Initiative 491 business. It was completely unacceptable to suggest that nothing good could be said about your Andrew because he would have supported 491.”

“Oh! Well...” Jeannette groped for words. “I'm sure Richard meant well. I mean, I know it's very important to you and Richard to defeat 491.”

“Much more important to Richard than to me, I'm sure,” Anne said at once. As soon as the words were out, Anne herself was shocked at them. She feared they suggested a lamentable lack of devotion to her marriage to Richard—or even worse, far worse, a desire for unfaithfulness.

Anne pursed her lips in shame. Her heart had begun to beat too hard for Jeannette again. Beneath her skirt, that which modesty so primly concealed was again increasing in length and warmth, just as if she were fully bisexual indeed. Her mind, too, was becoming fully erect with a totally unacceptable but frighteningly attractive thought: if Initiative 491 were to pass, her marriage to Richard would have no further legal validity—and she would never be satisfied with a mere “homosexual service contract,” any more than the real Anne would have accepted a mere “heterosexual service contract” with Gilbert! Her marriage to Richard would end! She would then be free to marry Jeannette someday, if ever Jeannette would have her. Vickie and Winston could be Anne's children too, and Anne would be delighted to have them.

“Oh!” Jeannette exclaimed. “My goodness! I didn’t know, uh, you and Richard disagreed about that!”

“It isn’t easy to tell,” Anne acknowledged, “when Richard says everything and I don’t say anything.”

Jeannette stared in silence. “It sounds as if you and Richard have some things you need to work out in your marriage,” she said at last. “Do you think it might help to talk about them?”

Anne could not speak. Fear gripped her heart. That way, she knew full well, might lie unfaithfulness. Her heart and her hidden elongation would conspire to overthrow her. This, as everyone knew or *should* know, was how unfaithfulness often got started. A kind, considerate, sympathetic friend would listen to complaints about a spouse, under pretext of helpfulness. Too soon, too often, the friend would turn into more than a friend, an illicit lover and breaker of marriage vows. Still, Anne could not imagine Jeannette as a marriage-wrecker—and it would be so comforting to have someone to confide in!

She would do it, she decided. She *must* do it. She had suffered alone for too long, with little or no hope that her marriage might improve. If there was any chance that Jeannette could help, Anne must seize that chance—and modesty must work overtime at concealment.

“Yes, I do,” Anne said. “It may take a while. I hope you won’t mind.”

“I’ll be glad to listen for as long as you need to talk.” Jeannette’s eyes met Anne’s, and her heart spoke straight to Anne’s heart without another word. Anne gave thanks to God for such a friend, though not for the improper hardening of her elongation beneath her skirt. Vickie’s attention, too, no longer even seemed to be entirely on her lunch. Anne hoped it would not be harmful for Vickie to hear what she was about to say.

“I guess I’d better start from the beginning,” said Anne. “Of course I was always taught that people should decide for themselves how to live their lives, and not bow down to other people’s rules and notions

about whether they should be gay or straight, or do so-called men's jobs or women's jobs, and all that."

"Oh, of course," said Jeannette. "Um, did you grow up here on Queen's Bluff?"

Anne did not think the question a non-sequitur, as someone unaware of the reputation of Queen's Bluff might have done. "Yes," she said, "and St. Austin's is the only church I've ever belonged to. It was always known as a hotbed of liberalism, even when same-sex marriage was only a pipedream." Anne tried to smile, but she wasn't sure the smile wasn't coming out as a grimace.

"Anyway, I discovered *Anne of Green Gables* when I was 11, the same age as Anne at the beginning of the book. I was a skinny, homely, lonely, red-haired kid like her, and I loved her. If there had been a real girl like Anne, I would have loved her too—even if she'd given me as hard a time as Anne gave Gilbert in the first three books, until the end of the third."

Jeannette smiled. "He was so devoted to her," she said, "even when she was—um—pretty obnoxious to him."

"Well, yes," Anne acknowledged.

"But I guess you didn't find a real girl like Anne, did you?"

"No—except for myself, if you can count me. I secretly pretended I was Anne for years." She didn't think she needed to burden Jeannette with the whole truth: she had desperately escaped into the imaginary world of Anne for years, in hope of grasping some flimsy shreds of happiness while her parents were destroying their marriage. "In high school," she said, "I gradually started 'coming out' as Anne, letting my hair grow long and even wearing it in braids, although I didn't dare wear girls' clothes to school. Everyone thought I was gay anyway."

"Um—were you, uh, always gay?"

Anne glanced at Jeannette's shy but eager eyes and looked away. This way lay danger, she feared, but she must tell the truth. "Well, I used to think I was bisexual," Anne admitted. "I did feel attracted to

girls sometimes.” *And I still do—right now!* her racing heart, her hot face, and her well-concealed elongation cried out in unison, though Anne sternly suppressed their cry. “But I felt attracted to boys and men too. The more I came out as Anne, the more attracted to them I felt—especially when they were attracted to *me*, which the girls never were.”

“What if they’d *both* been attracted to you?” Jeannette’s words were so soft that Anne could hardly hear them. She was blushing as she spoke, and her eyes were fixed on her hands clasped in her lap.

Anne’s heart leapt like a hard-bucking horse. She dared not believe, she dared not even imagine, what Jeannette might mean by this—for, if she did dare, she would imagine it meant Jeannette herself was attracted to her.

“Well,” said Anne, “I certainly wouldn’t have married a woman and then cheated with a man, or married a man and then cheated with a woman!”

“Oh, certainly not! How dreadful!” Jeannette affirmed.

“Actually, I was embarrassed, and even offended, at the thought of being bisexual,” said Anne, “because I thought it *must* mean cheating, one way or the other, if I actually, um, expressed my bisexuality in both ways.”

“Well, yes, you’d certainly have to make a choice, not to do one or the other.”

“Yes, indeed! So I did make a choice. The more feminine I became, the more I naturally felt attracted to men—and I certainly knew men were more attracted to me than women were, when I was being as feminine as the real Anne. (I think of her as the *real* Anne, you know, even though she’s only a fictional character.) And so I dreamed, more and more, of being faithful to a gay husband for life, even though same-sex marriages weren’t recognized back then.”

“I can certainly understand that,” Jeannette said softly. “I’m sure I—well, I probably would have wanted a same-sex marriage too, if I’d been more attracted to women than to men.”

“Because you would have hated cheating, and promiscuity, and all that sort of thing as much as I do.” Anne had to insist out loud, to Jeannette and to herself, that she would never cheat with her—no matter how much her feelings of attraction might tend to overwhelm her, as indeed they were tending to do right now.

“Anyway, so I followed my dream until it came true,” Anne quickly went on. “As soon as I escaped from high school and from my parents’ house—or my *mom’s* house, they were divorced by then—I went all out to look like Anne, or what I imagined Anne would look like nowadays. I wore pretty ladies’ clothes and everything, and wore my hair in braids like now. I studied English in college, and then I got a job on the office staff of the General Hospital. Before long I attracted the attention of a rising young star among the doctors, *you know who*. He secretly revealed that he was gay, and he asked me for dates, and was always very sweet and considerate and patient.” Anne omitted to mention that Richard, though considerate and patient indeed, had then been rather too eager to reveal to her that which modesty conceals. Neither did she disclose to Jeannette that she had fully succumbed to Richard’s gay entreaties while yet unmarried to him—for there had been, as yet, no prospect of same-sex marriage for a virtuous young gay transvestite maiden to wait for.

“Well, I just thought that was obviously divine providence at work,” Anne said. “In the books, Anne would have called it predestination, but she was a Presbyterian and I’ve always been an Episcopalian. I lost my heart completely to Richard, and he said he was in love with me, and we pledged our mutual fidelity forever even though we couldn’t legally get married yet. Then, when we could, we were one of the first same-sex couples to be married in the State of Pacificum, and I think the very first at St. Austin’s.”

Anne looked at Jeannette, whose eyes were fixed on her. “Do you think it really was divine providence?” Jeannette softly asked.

It was a question that Anne had never successfully answered, no matter how hard she tried, ever since she first started to question whether it really was. She told Jeannette just that.



“When did you start to question it, and why?” Jeannette asked even more softly.

Why do you ask? Anne thought. *What does it matter? We're married now, and that's that!* She did not speak the words. She would try to answer Jeannette's question, and she could not honestly say she didn't know the answer.

“I think it was when I first suspected that Richard might have been lying to me about wanting to adopt children,” Anne said. “I've always loved children, as the real Anne did.” She gave a little laugh and glanced at Vickie, who was looking straight at her. “And I've always wanted to adopt children when it was possible, since I couldn't have any myself in a same-sex marriage. At first Richard led me to believe he wanted to adopt children too, as soon as we had enough money—but before too long we had plenty of money, and he still didn't want to adopt.”

“That must have been terribly sad for you,” said Jeannette.

“Yes.” Anne could say no more, lest she defame Richard.

Jeannette's tender heart, and her deep sympathy for Anne, showed plainly in her moist brown eyes. “Then,” she said in obvious pain, “you don't think there's any hope of working things out, and maybe changing his mind about that?”

Anne hesitated long, though she knew the answer full well. The dreadful answer had power to change the whole course of her future life, and the change might easily be for the worse. Still, she had tried for far too long to avoid staring the answer straight in its ugly face, and she had failed. “No,” she said at last.

Jeannette's affectionate heart must needs show itself in a tender touch upon Anne's slender shoulder. “Oh, Anne, I'm so sorry for you!” she said. “I wish I could help! I'll pray for you every day, and for Richard too!”

“Thank you, Jeannette,” Anne said. “You're so kind; you're such a good friend.” She dared not throw herself into Jeannette's arms and seek solace, for that might well be the start of a short, straight road to

infidelity. She could only cover her face with her hands, and moisten her hands with tears, and soon start sobbing until she felt her heart would break.

“Mommy,” Vickie said when the picnic had ended and her little fatherless family had gone home, “is Mrs. Oglestone a boy or a girl?”

“Well,” Jeannette said slowly, “that’s a very good question.” She had a vague, uneasy feeling that Vickie already knew the answer and was asking for some other purpose than to find out the answer, but she would give the answer anyway. “Mrs. Oglestone is a man, but we call her *she* and *her* and *Mrs.* because she looks like a woman and she’s married to a man.”

“If she’s really a man, Daddy would say she can’t *really* be married to another man.”

“Yes, honey, I know Daddy would say that.”

“Well, was he right?”

Jeannette wished Anne were still here to help her give the best answer. Anne and Vickie had hit it off well right away, and Anne was at least as bright as Vickie, which Jeannette feared she herself was not. In Anne’s absence, Jeannette would simply have to grope for an unsatisfactory answer, and in the end admit she didn’t really know.

“Well, that’s another very good question,” she said. “It’s one that a lot of grown-ups don’t agree with each other about. You know how grown-ups sometimes go to vote in elections.”

“Yes. I don’t think it’s fair to have to be a grown-up. I want to vote too, and I can’t.”

Jeannette smiled. “Maybe it isn’t fair, Vickie. You could probably do at least as good a job of voting as some grown-ups who do vote, but that’s how it is. Anyway, grown-ups are going to vote pretty soon about whether or not a man can marry another man, and a woman can marry another woman, and it looks

like about half of them will vote one way and half of them will vote the other way, because so many grown-ups don't agree about it."

Vickie looked puzzled. "But I want to know which ones are *right*," she patiently explained.

"Well, sweetie, one reason why grown-ups have elections is that they don't agree about who's right and who's wrong, so they decide by letting the bigger number of people have their way—even if it isn't a *much* bigger number, like people think it won't be in this close election."

Incomprehension and outrage vied for the mastery of Vickie's facial expression, and the outcome was in serious doubt. The bright little girl was struggling with all her might to think the thing through, and she wasn't finding it easy. "You mean," she said at last, "if a hundred people vote that a man can marry a man, and a hundred other people vote that a man *can't* marry a man, and there's one person left, then the one person gets to say 'nyaah, nyaah, a man can marry a man' or 'nyaah, nyaah, a man *can't* marry a man'—and it doesn't matter if the one person is right or wrong?"

Jeannette tried to see if there was a fault in Vickie's logic, but she couldn't find one. "Yes, I'm afraid that's right," she said.

Outrage had gained the upper hand in Vickie's face. "No, that's *wrong!*" she insisted. "It does too matter! Which one do *you* think is right?"

Jeannette sighed and wished again for Anne's help. Vickie had surely inherited her father's strong will and his impatience with evasive answers. "Honey, I'm afraid I don't know," she said. "I guess I'm like the one person left. I've tried to see which one I think is right, but it wasn't easy."

Vickie frowned and was silent for a moment. Her next words seemed to be a complete change of subject, until Jeannette recalled that Vickie's entire inquiry had begun with Mrs. Oglestone. "Why was Mrs. Oglestone crying?" Vickie asked.

"Well, honey," Jeannette tried to explain, "this is a secret, so please don't tell anyone, but Mrs.

Oglestone was crying because she loves children, and her husband, Dr. Oglestone, doesn't ever want to adopt any children. And of course they couldn't have any children if they didn't adopt them, because two men who are married to each other can't have children without adopting them; only a man and a woman can." Jeannette hoped Vickie wouldn't demand details about why that was so until she was at least a bit older. Fortunately she didn't; it would have been a distraction from her real train of thought, which was rushing toward its destination at full speed.

"If a man couldn't really marry another man, like Daddy said," Vickie inquired, "and Mrs. Oglestone is really a man and Dr. Oglestone's a man too, then Mrs. Oglestone wouldn't really be married to Dr. Oglestone, would she?"

"Um—no, that's true, she wouldn't."

"So then she could marry a *woman*, couldn't she?"

Jeannette stared at her daughter, but quickly forced her eyes away. Now at last she saw, with a sudden shock, the reason why Vickie was asking these questions about Mrs. Oglestone—the reason that Vickie herself, no doubt, had seen from the first. Still, Jeannette had to answer the question truthfully. "Yes, if—well—yes, then she could."

Vickie moved in for the *coup de grâce*. "Since Daddy's in Heaven now," she asked, "then could Mrs. Oglestone marry *you* on earth?"

Jeannette's lips kept silence, though her heart did not, for as long as she dared. "Well," she then said, "since Daddy's in Heaven, it would be possible for me to marry somebody else on earth. That's because people aren't married to each other any more when they're in Heaven, or when one of them is in Heaven and the other one is still on earth. But—" She was about to say she couldn't really marry Mrs. Oglestone, but she stopped. Vickie had worked out the logic for her, step by step. If a man could no longer marry another man, then Jeannette could marry Anne, who was really a man. She might even think it a very good idea, in some ways at least, and her hard-beating heart might find it eminently satisfactory.