

when is anne of green gables set

When is Anne of Green Gables set is a question that often arises when discussing L.M. Montgomery's beloved novel. Published in 1908, the story is set in the fictional community of Avonlea on Prince Edward Island, Canada. The narrative follows the life of Anne Shirley, an imaginative and spirited orphan who is mistakenly sent to live with Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, a brother and sister duo who intended to adopt a boy to help them run their farm. The setting plays a crucial role in shaping the characters, themes, and overall atmosphere of the story. This article delves deeper into the time period of Anne of Green Gables, its historical context, and the significance of the setting in the narrative.

Historical Context of the Early 20th Century

To understand when Anne of Green Gables is set, it is essential to analyze the historical context of the early 20th century. The novel is predominantly set during the 1890s and early 1900s, a time when Canada was experiencing significant social and economic changes.

Social Changes

During this period, Canada was transitioning from a primarily agrarian society to one that was becoming increasingly urbanized. This shift brought about various social changes, including:

1. **The Expansion of Education:** Education was becoming more accessible, especially for girls, which is a significant theme in Anne's story. Anne values education and dreams of becoming a writer, reflecting the aspirations of many young women of her time.
2. **The Role of Women:** The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw early feminist movements advocating for women's rights. Marilla Cuthbert, while traditional in many ways, embodies the strength and independence that women of this era were beginning to embrace.
3. **Immigration and Diversity:** Canada was becoming a destination for immigrants from various countries. Although Avonlea is depicted as a predominantly white community, the broader Canadian landscape was changing, which influenced the cultural fabric of the nation.

Economic Changes

The economy during this era was characterized by:

1. **Agricultural Development:** Farming remained a central aspect of life in Avonlea, and the characters engage in various farming activities. The agricultural practices depicted in the novel reflect the realities of rural life at the time.
2. **Industrialization:** While Avonlea is a rural setting, the surrounding areas began to experience industrial growth, which would eventually shape the economy and lifestyle of Canadians. This aspect of modernization is subtly reflected in the aspirations of characters like Anne.

The Setting of Avonlea

Avonlea, where Anne's story unfolds, is a picturesque village inspired by Montgomery's own experiences growing up on Prince Edward Island. The detailed descriptions of the landscape, community, and social interactions provide rich context to the narrative.

Geographical Features

The natural beauty of Prince Edward Island plays a significant role in the story. Key geographical features include:

- Rolling Green Hills: The lush green fields and rolling hills symbolize the idyllic life that Anne dreams of, contrasting with her tough childhood as an orphan.
- The Lake of Shining Waters: A significant location in the novel, this lake represents Anne's imagination and the beauty of nature. It serves as a backdrop for many of her adventures.
- The White Way of Delight: The avenue lined with cherry blossoms becomes a metaphor for Anne's dreams and aspirations.

Community Life

The portrayal of community life in Avonlea reflects the values and social dynamics of the time. Key aspects include:

1. Strong Community Bonds: The residents of Avonlea are closely knit, and their interactions drive much of the plot. Events such as community picnics, school functions, and church gatherings depict the importance of social ties.
2. Gossip and Reputation: The community's tendency to gossip plays a significant role in shaping Anne's experiences. Her imaginative and often unconventional behavior leads to both admiration and criticism from her peers and adults.

Thematic Elements Influenced by the Setting

The setting of Anne of Green Gables is not just a backdrop; it deeply influences the themes and character development throughout the novel. Several key themes are intertwined with the setting:

Imagination vs. Reality

Anne's vivid imagination often clashes with the realities of her life in Avonlea. The beautiful landscapes and serene environment provide a canvas for her dreams, yet she must navigate the expectations and limitations imposed by her community.

Belonging and Identity

Anne's journey towards finding a sense of belonging is a central theme. The contrast between her

past as an orphan and her new life in Avonlea underscores her quest for identity and acceptance. The acceptance by Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert is a turning point, highlighting the human need for connection.

Friendship and Community

The friendships Anne forms, particularly with Diana Barry, illustrate the importance of companionship in shaping one's life. The supportive and sometimes challenging dynamics of community life in Avonlea emphasize the role of relationships in personal growth.

The Impact of the Setting on Characters

The characters in Anne of Green Gables are intricately connected to their environment. The setting influences their personalities, decisions, and relationships.

Anne Shirley

Anne's imaginative nature is deeply rooted in the beauty of her surroundings. The landscapes of Prince Edward Island inspire her creativity and dreams. Her ability to see the world through a lens of wonder often contrasts with the more pragmatic views of her peers.

Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert

The Cuthberts, as guardians of Anne, represent the traditional values of rural life. Their characters are shaped by their experiences in Avonlea, with Marilla embodying practicality and duty, while Matthew's gentle nature is influenced by the peacefulness of their surroundings.

Diana Barry

Diana, Anne's closest friend, reflects the social dynamics of Avonlea. Her character illustrates the importance of friendship in navigating the complexities of growing up in a close-knit community.

Conclusion: The Timelessness of Anne of Green Gables

When considering when Anne of Green Gables is set, it becomes clear that the early 20th century context enriches the narrative and enhances the reader's understanding of the characters and their journeys. The idyllic setting of Avonlea, with its stunning landscapes and tightly woven community life, provides the perfect backdrop for Anne's adventures and growth. The themes of imagination, belonging, and the importance of relationships resonate with readers across generations, making the story timeless.

In conclusion, the period in which Anne of Green Gables is set is not only a reflection of historical changes but also a vital element that shapes the story's core. The enchanting world of Avonlea

continues to captivate readers, inviting them into a life filled with dreams, challenges, and the pursuit of happiness.

Frequently Asked Questions

When is 'Anne of Green Gables' set?

'Anne of Green Gables' is primarily set in the late 19th century, specifically during the 1880s.

What historical events frame the setting of 'Anne of Green Gables'?

The story is set during a time of significant social change in Canada, post-Confederation, reflecting the life and culture of rural communities in Prince Edward Island.

How does the setting influence the themes of 'Anne of Green Gables'?

The rural setting of Green Gables highlights themes of belonging, imagination, and the contrast between nature and societal expectations, which are central to Anne's character and story.

Is 'Anne of Green Gables' based on a specific historical period?

While 'Anne of Green Gables' is a work of fiction, it captures the essence of life in Canada during the late 1800s, reflecting the customs, education, and family life of that era.

What impact did the setting have on Anne's character development?

The picturesque setting of Avonlea allows Anne to explore her imagination and creativity, shaping her journey of self-discovery and personal growth throughout the novel.

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