

# A DAY OFF

No. 8 of a New Series of "Anne" Stories

By L. M. Montgomery, Author of "Anne of Green Gables"

**T**OMORROW being Saturday I'm going to look after Mrs. Raymond's twins while she goes to Charlottetown to the funeral of some relative, Anne Shirley told Rebecca Dew, the rosy maid-of-all-work at her boarding house. Rebecca Dew pursed her mouth.

"Do you know what you're letting yourself in for, Miss Shirley. Them Raymond twins are notorious."

"But I love children, Rebecca."

"Children, yes . . . but them's holy terrors, Miss Shirley. Mrs. Raymond doesn't believe in punishing children no matter what they do. She says she's determined they'll have a natural life. They take people in by that saintly look of theirs but I've heard what her neighbors have to say of them. The minister's wife called one afternoon . . . well, Mrs. Raymond was very sweet to her but when she was leaving a shower of Spanish onions came flying down the stairs and one of them knocked her hat off. 'Children always behave abominably when you specially want them to be good,' was all Mrs. Raymond said."

"Mrs. Raymond was a wonderful help to me in the Dramatic Club last winter," said Anne, "and one good turn deserves another."

"Well, don't say I didn't warn you," said Rebecca.

Saturday morning Anne betook herself to the pretty, old-fashioned cottage on a street that straggled out into the country, where Mrs. Raymond and her famous twins lived. Mrs. Raymond was ready to depart, rather gaily dressed for a funeral perhaps, but looking very beautiful. The seven-year-old twins, who had inherited her beauty, were sitting on the stairs looking quite angelic. They had round, cherubic faces of pink and white, large, china-blue eyes, and aureoles of fine, fluffy, pale-yellow hair. They smiled with engaging sweetness when their mother introduced them to Anne and told them that dear Miss Shirley had been so good as to come and take care of them while Mother was away at dear Aunt Ella's funeral, and of course they would be good and not give her one teeny-weeny bit of trouble, wouldn't they, darlings? The darlings nodded gravely and contrived, though it hadn't seemed possible, to look more angelic than ever.

Mrs. Raymond took Anne down the walk to the gate with her.

"They're all I've got . . . now," she said pathetically. "Perhaps I may have spoiled them a little . . . I know people say I have. People always know so much better how you ought to bring up your children than you know yourself, haven't you noticed, Miss Shirley? But I think loving is better than spanking any day, don't you, Miss Shirley? I'm sure you'll have no trouble with them. Children always know whom they can play on and whom they can't, don't you think? That poor old Miss Prouty up the street . . . I had her to stay with them one day but the poor darlings couldn't bear her. So of course they teased her a good bit . . . you know what children are. But they'll just love you and I know they'll be angels. Of course they have high spirits . . . but children should have, don't you think? I like them to be natural, don't you? Too good children don't seem natural some way, do they? Don't let them sail their boats in the bathtub or go wading in the pond, will you? I'm so afraid of their catching cold . . . their dear father died of pneumonia. Don't

worry if they quarrel a little . . . children always do quarrel, don't they? But if any outsider attacks them . . . my dear! They really just worship each other you know. I could have taken one of them to the funeral but they simply wouldn't hear of it. They've never been separated for a day in their lives. And I couldn't look after twins at a funeral, could I now?"

"Don't worry, Mrs. Raymond. I'm sure Gerald and Geraldine and I will have a beautiful day together. I love children."

"I know it. I knew the minute I saw you that you loved children. One can always tell, don't you think? Poor old Miss Prouty detests them. She looks for the worst in children and so of course she finds it. You can't conceive what a comfort it is to me to reflect that my darlings are under the care of one who loves . . . who understands children. I'm sure I'll quite enjoy the day."

"You might take us to the funeral," shrieked Gerald, suddenly sticking his head out of an upstairs window. "We never have any fun like that."

"Oh, they're in the bathroom," exclaimed Mrs. Raymond tragically. "Dear Miss Shirley, please go and take them out. Gerald darling, you know Mother couldn't take you both to the funeral. Oh, Miss Shirley, he's got that coyote skin from the parlor floor tied round his neck again by the paws. He'll ruin it. Please make him take it off at once. I must hurry or I'll miss the train."

Mrs. Raymond sailed elegantly away and Anne ran upstairs to find that the angelic Geraldine had grasped her brother by the legs and was apparently trying to hurl him out of the window.

"Miss Shirley, make Gerald stop putting out his tongue at me," she demanded fiercely.

"Does it hurt you?" asked Anne smiling.

"Well, he's not going to put out his tongue at me," retorted Geraldine defiantly, with a baleful look at Gerald who returned it with interest.

"My tongue's my own and you can't stop me from putting it out when I like. Can she, Miss Shirley?"

Anne ignored the question.

"Twins dear, it's just an hour to lunch time. Shall we go and sit in the garden and play games and tell stories? And, Gerald, won't you put that coyote skin back on the floor?"

"But I want to play wolf," said Gerald. "He wants to play wolf," cried Geraldine, suddenly aligning herself on her brother's side.

"We want to play wolf," they both cried together.

A peal from the door-bell out the knot of Anne's dilemma.

"C'm'on and see who it is," cried Geraldine. They flew to the stairs and by reason of sliding down the bannister got to the front door much quicker than Anne, the coyote skin coming unloosed and drifting away in the process.

"We never buy anything from peddlars," Gerald told the lady standing on the doorstep.

"Can I see your mother?" asked the lady. "No, you can't. She's gone to Aunt Ella's funeral. Miss Shirley's looking after us. That's her coming down the stairs. She'll make you scat."

Anne did feel rather like making the caller "scat" when she saw who it was. Miss Pamela Blake was not a popular caller in town. She was always "canvassing" for something and it was generally quite impossible to get rid of her unless you bought it, since she was utterly impervious to snubs and hints and apparently had all the time in the world at her command. This time she was "taking orders" for an encyclopedia, something no school teacher could afford to be without. Vainly Anne protested that she did not need an encyclopedia . . . the High School already possessed a very good one.

"Ten years out of date," said Miss Pamela firmly. "We'll just sit down here on this rustic bench, Miss Shirley, and I'll show you my prospectus."

"I'm afraid I haven't time, Miss Drake. I have the children to look after . . ."

"It won't take but a few minutes. I've been meaning to call on you, Miss Shirley, and I call it real fortunate to find you here. Run away and play, children, while Miss Shirley and I run over this beautiful prospectus."

"Mother's hired Miss Shirley to look

after us," said Geraldine with a toss of her aerial curls. But Gerald had tugged her backward and they slammed the door shut.

"You see, Miss Shirley, what this encyclopedia means. Look at the beautiful paper . . . the splendid engravings . . . the wonderful print. And all for eighty dollars . . . ten dollars down and eight dollars a month till it's all paid. You'll never have such another chance . . . we're just doing this to introduce it . . . next year it will be one hundred and twenty."

"But I don't want an encyclopedia, Miss Drake," said Anne desperately.

"Of course you want an encyclopedia . . . a National Encyclopedia. I don't know how I lived before I became acquainted with the National Encyclopedia. Live! I didn't live. I merely existed. Look at that engraving of the cassowary, Miss Shirley. Did you ever really see a cassowary before?"

"But, Miss Drake, I . . ."

"If you think the terms a little too onerous I can make a special arrangement for you . . . six dollars a month instead of eight. You simply can't refuse an offer like that, Miss Shirley."

Anne almost felt she couldn't. Wouldn't it be worth six dollars a month to get rid of this terrible woman, who had evidently made up her mind not to go until she had got an order? Besides, what were the twins doing? They were uncannily quiet. Suppose they were sailing their boats in the bath-tub? Or had sneaked out of the back door and gone wading in the pond?

She made one more pitiful effort to escape.

"I'll think this over, Miss Drake, and let you know . . ."

"There's no time like the present," said Miss Drake briskly, getting out her fountain pen. "You know you're going to take the National . . . so you might just as well sign for it now as any other time. Nothing is ever gained by putting things off. The price may go up any moment and then you'd have to pay one hundred and twenty. Sign here, Miss Shirley."

Anne felt the fountain pen being forced into her hand . . . another moment . . . and then there was such a blood-curdling shriek from Miss Drake that Anne dropped the fountain pen under the clump of golden glow that flanked the rustic seat and gazed in amazed horror at her companion.

Was that Miss Drake? That indescribable object, hatless, spectacleless, almost front, were floating in the air above her head, half way up to the bath-room window, out of which two golden heads were hanging. Gerald was grasping a fishing rod of which were tied two cords ending in fishing hooks. By what magic he had contrived to make a triple catch only he could have told. Probably it was sheer luck.

Anne flew into the house and upstairs: by the time she reached the bath-room the twins had fled. Gerald had dropped the fishing rod and a peep from the window revealed a furious Miss Drake retrieving her belongings, including the fountain pen and the prospectus, and marching to the gate. For once in her life Miss Pamela Drake had failed to land her order.

Anne discovered the twins scraphically eating apples on the back porch. It was hard to know what to do. Certainly such behavior could not be allowed to pass without a rebuke but Gerald had undoubtedly rescued her from a difficult position and Miss Drake was an odious creature who needed a lesson. Still . . .

"You've et a great big worm," shrieked Gerald. "I saw it disappear down your throat."

Geraldine laid down her apple and promptly turned sick . . . very sick. Anne had her hands full for some time. And when Geraldine was better it was lunch time and Anne decided to let Gerald off with a very mild rebuke. After all, no lasting harm had been done to Miss Drake, who would probably hold her tongue religiously about the incident for her own sake.

"Do you think, Gerald," she said gently, "that what you did was a gentlemanly action?"

"Nope," said Gerald, "but it was good fun. Gee, I'm some fisherman, ain't I?"

The lunch was excellent. Mrs. Raymond had prepared it before she left and, whatever her shortcomings as a disciplinarian might be, she was a good cook. Gerald and Geraldine, being occupied with gorging did not quarrel or display worse table manners

than the general run of children. After lunch Anne washed the dishes, getting Geraldine to help dry them, and Gerald to put them carefully away in the cupboard. They were both quite knacky at it and Anne reflected complacently that all they needed was wise training and a little firmness.

At two o'clock Mr. James Grand called. Mr. Grand was chairman of the High School board of trustees, and had matters of importance to talk of, which he wished to discuss fully before he left on Monday to attend an educational conference in Kingsport. Could he come to Anne's boarding house in the evening? Unfortunately he couldn't.

Mr. Grand was a good sort of man in his own fashion, but Anne had long ago found out that he must be handled with gloves. Moreover, Anne was very anxious to get him on her side in a battle royal over new desks and maps that was looming up. She went out to the twins.

"Darlings, will you play nicely out in the back yard while I have a little talk with Mr. Grand? It won't be very long . . . and then we'll have an afternoon tea-picnic down on the banks of the pond . . . and I'll teach you to blow soap-bubbles with red dye in them . . . the loveliest things . . ."

"Will you give us a quarter apiece if we behave?" demanded Gerald.

"No, Gerald dear," said Anne firmly. "I'm not going to bribe you. I know you are going to be good, just because I asked you, as a gentleman should."

"We'll be good, Miss Shirley," promised Gerald solemnly.

"Awful good," echoed Geraldine, with equal solemnity.

It is just possible that they would have kept their promise if Ivy Trent had not arrived almost as soon as Anne was closeted with Mr. Grand in the parlor. But Ivy Trent did arrive, and the Raymond twins hated Ivy Trent . . . the impeccable Ivy Trent who never did anything wrong, and always looked as if she had just stepped out of a band-box. On this particular afternoon there was no doubt that Ivy Trent had come over to show off her beautiful new brown shoes and her sash and shoulder-bows and hair-bows of scarlet ribbon. Mrs. Raymond, whatever she lacked in some respects, had fairly sensible ideas about dressing children, and Geraldine never had the chance to parade the street in the style of Ivy Trent who had a dress for every afternoon in the week. Mrs. Trent always arrayed her in "spotless white." At least, Ivy was always spotless when she left home; if she were not quite so spotless when she returned that, of course, was the fault of the "jealous" children with whom the neighborhood abounded.

Geraldine was jealous. She longed for scarlet sash and shoulder-bows and white embroidered dresses. What would she now have given for brown shoes like that? "How do you like my new sash-they're shoulder-bows?" mimicked Geraldine tauntingly.

"But you haven't got shoulder-bows," said Ivy grandly.

"But you haven't got shoulder-bows," squeaked Geraldine.

Ivy looked puzzled.

"I have so . . . Can't you see them?" "They ain't paid for," said Gerald. Ivy Trent had a temper. It showed itself.

(Continued on Next Page.)

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in her face which grew as red as her shoulder-bows.

"They are, too. My mother always pays her bills."

"My mother always pays her bills," echoed Geraldine. She was very happy in this brilliant idea of repeating everything Ivy said scornfully.

Ivy was uncomfortable. She didn't know exactly how to cope with this. So she turned to Gerald, who was undoubtedly the handsomest boy on the street. Ivy had made up her mind about him.

"I came over to tell you I'm going to have you for my beau," she said, looking eloquently at him out of a pair of brown eyes that, even at seven, Ivy had learned had a devastating effect on most of the small boys of her acquaintance.

Gerald turned crimson.

"I won't be your beau," he said.

"But you've got to be," said Ivy serenely.

"But you've got to be," said Geraldine, wagging her head.

"I won't be," shouted Gerald furiously.

"And don't you give me any more of your lily Ivy Trent!"

"You have to be," said Ivy stubbornly.

"You have to be," said Geraldine.

Ivy glared at her.

"You just shut up, Geraldine Raymond."

"I guess I can talk in my own yard," said Geraldine.

"Course she can," said Gerald, "and if you don't shut up, Ivy Trent, I'll just go over to your place and dig the eyes out of your doll."

"My mother would spank you if you did," cried Ivy.

"Oh, she would, would she? Well, do you know what my mother would do to her if she did? She'd just sock her one on the nose."

"Well, anyway, you've got to be my beau," said Ivy, returning calmly to the vital subject.

"I . . . I'll duck your head in the rain-barrel," yelled the maddened Gerald. "I'll rub your face in an ant's nest . . . I'll . . . I'll tear them bows and sash off you . . . triumphantly, for this at least was possible."

"Let's do it," squealed Geraldine.

They pounced like furies on the unfortunate Ivy, who kicked and shrieked and tried to bite, but was no match for the two of them. Together they hauled her across the yard into the woodshed, where her howls could not be heard.

"Hurry," gasped Geraldine, "fore Miss Shirley comes out."

No time was to be lost. Gerald held Ivy's legs while Geraldine held her wrists with one hand and tore off her bows and sash with the other.

"Let's paint her legs," shouted Gerald, his eye falling on a couple of cans of paint left there by some workmen of the previous week. "I'll hold her and you paint her."

Ivy shrieked in vain despair. Her stockings were pulled down and in a few moments her legs were adorned with wide stripes of red and green paint. In the process a good deal of the paint got splattered over her embroidered dress and her new shoes. As a finishing touch they filled her hair with burrs. She was a pitiful sight when they finally released her. The twins howled mirthfully as they looked at her. Long weeks of airs and condescensions from Ivy were avenged.

"Now you go home," said Gerald. "This'll teach you to go round telling people they have to be your beau."

"I'll tell my mother," wept Ivy. "I'll go straight home and tell my mother on you, you horrid, hateful, ugly boy!"

"Don't you call my brother ugly, you stuck-up thing," cried Geraldine. "You and your shoulder-bows! Here, take them with you. We don't want them cluttering up our woodshed."

Ivy, pursued by the bows, which Geraldine pelled after her, ran sobbing out of the yard and down the street.

"Quick . . . let's sneak up the back

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stairs and clean up, 'fore Miss Shirley sees us," gasped Geraldine.

Mr. Grand had talked himself out and bowed himself away. Anne stood for a moment on the doorstep, wondering uneasily where her charges were. Up the street and in at the gate came a wrathful lady, leading a forlorn and still sobbing atom of humanity by the hand.

"Miss Shirley, where is Mrs. Raymond?" demanded Mrs. Trent.

"Mrs. Raymond is . . ."

"I insist on seeing Mrs. Raymond. She shall see with her own eyes what her children have done to my poor, helpless, innocent Ivy. Look at her, Miss Shirley."

"Oh, Mrs. Trent, I'm so sorry. This is all my fault. Mrs. Raymond is away and I promised to look after the children . . . but Mr. Grand came . . ."

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"No, it isn't your fault, Miss Shirley. I don't blame you. No one can cope with those diabolical children. The whole street knows them. If Mrs. Raymond isn't home there is no point in my remaining. I shall take my poor child home. But Mrs. Raymond shall hear of this . . . indeed she shall. Listen to that, Miss Shirley! Are they killing each other?"

"That" was a chorus of shrieks, howls, yells that came echoing down the stairs. Anne ran upwards. On the hall floor was a twisting, writhing, biting, tearing, scratching mass. Anne separated the furious twins with difficulty and, holding each firmly by a squirming shoulder, demanded the meaning of such conduct.

"She says I've got to be Ivy Trent's beau," snarled Gerald.

"So he has got to be," screamed Geraldine. "I won't be . . ."

"You've got to be . . ."

"Children!" said Anne. Something in her tone quelled them. They looked at her and saw a Miss Shirley they had not seen before. For the first time in their young lives they felt the force of authority. "You, Geraldine," said Anne quietly, "will go to bed for two hours. You, Ivy Trent, will spend the same length of time in the hall closet. Not a word! You have behaved abominably and you must take your punishment. Your mother left you in my charge and you will obey me."

"You . . . you've no right to separate us . . . we've never been separated," muttered Gerald.

"You will be now." Anne was still very quiet. Meekly Geraldine took off her clothes and got into one of the cots in their room. Meekly Gerald entered the hall closet. It was a large, airy closet with a window and a chair and nobody could have called the punishment a very severe one. Anne locked the door and sat down with a book by the hall window. At least for two hours she would know a little peace of mind. A peep at Geraldine a few minutes later showed her sound asleep. Looking so lovely in her slumber that Anne almost repented of her sternness. Well, a nap would be good for her, anyway. When she awakened she would permit her to get up, even if the time limit had not expired.

At the end of an hour Geraldine was still sleeping. Gerald had been so quiet that Anne decided he had taken his punishment like a man and might be forgiven. After all, Ivy Trent was a vain little monkey and had likely been very aggravating. She unlocked the closet and opened it.

There was no Gerald in the closet. The window was open and the roof of the side-porch was just beneath it. Anne's lips tightened. She went downstairs and out into the yard. No sign of Gerald. She explored the woodshed and looked up and down the street. Still no sign. She ran through the garden and through the gate into the lane that led through a patch of scrub woodland to the little pond. Gerald was happily polishing himself about on it, in the small flat that was kept there . . . something he had never had a chance to do before. Just as Anne broke through the trees Gerald's pole which he had stuck rather deeply in the mud, came away with unexpected ease at his third tug and Gerald promptly shot heels over head backward into the water.

Anne cried out involuntarily but there was little cause for alarm. The pond at its deepest would not come up to Gerald's shoulders, and where he had gone over it was no deeper than his waist. He had somehow got on his feet and was standing there rather foolishly, with his aureole plastered drippingly down on his head, when Anne's shriek was re-echoed behind her and Geraldine, in her night-dress, tore through the trees and out to the edge of the little wooden platform which the flat was commonly moored. With another despairing shriek of "Gerald!" she took a flying leap that landed her with a tremen-

dous splash by Gerald's side and almost gave him another ducking.

"Gerald, are you drowned?" cried Geraldine. "Are you drowned, darling?"

"No, no, darling," Gerald assured her through chattering teeth. They embraced and kissed passionately.

"Children, come in here this minute," said Anne.

They waded to the shore. The September day, warm in the morning, had turned cold and windy in its late afternoon. They shivered terribly. Their faces turned blue. Anne, without a word of blame, hurried them home, got their wet clothes off, and got them into their beds with hot water bottles at their feet. They still continued to shiver. Had they got a chill? Were they headed for pneumonia?

"You should have taken better care of us, Miss Shirley," said Gerald reproachfully.

"Course you should," said Geraldine.

A distracted Anne hurried downstairs and telephoned for the doctor. By the time he came the twins had got warm and he assured Anne they were in no danger. If they stayed in bed till the next day they would be all right.

He met Mrs. Raymond coming up from the station on his way back and it was a pale, almost hysterical lady who presently rushed in. "Oh, Miss Shirley, how could you have let my little treasures get into such danger?"

"That's just what we told her, mother," chorused the twins.

"I trusted you . . . I told you . . ."

"I hardly see how I was to blame, Mrs. Raymond," said Anne icily. "You will realize this, I think, when you are calmer. The children are quite all right . . . I simply sent for the doctor as a precautionary measure. If Gerald and Geraldine had not disobeyed me this would not have happened."

"I thought a teacher would have a little authority over children," said Mrs. Raymond bitterly.

"Over children, perhaps . . . but not young demons," Anne longed to say, but said only:

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"Since you are here, Mrs. Raymond, I think I will go home. I don't think I can be of any further service to you and I have some school work to do this evening."

Gerald sat up in bed.

"I hope there'll be a funeral every week," he said. "Cause I like you, Miss Shirley,

and I hope you'll come and look after us every time mother has to go away."

"So do I," said Geraldine.

"Ever so much better than Miss Prouty," said Gerald.

"Ever so much," said Geraldine.

"I'm . . . I'm sure you meant well," said Mrs. Raymond tremulously.

Anne found Rebecca Dew in the garden, gathering late pansies.

"Rebecca, I used to think the adage, 'Children should be seen and not heard' entirely too harsh. But I see it has its points."

"My poor darling, I'll get you a cup of tea," said Rebecca Dew. And did not say, "I told you so."

## MYSTERY SOLDIER IN NEW TEST

What may be the last attempt to establish the identity of the "living unknown soldier," who has baffled scientists since he was taken to Paris just after the World War, is to be made by three eminent French psychologists. Nineteen years ago the man, whose name was believed to be Mangin, was found wandering in the streets of Lyons, France, dressed in soldier's uniform. He knew nothing about himself or his doings, and could not remember his name. Mangin was sent to an asylum, where he was questioned by famous doctors for year after year. Never once did they get a lucid statement from him. Meanwhile, men and women from all parts of France have claimed him as husband or father or brother. More than 200 letters have been received trying to identify him, but without success.

## SHARK FISHING PROFITABLE

Norwegian fishermen report that shark fishing off the Shetland Islands is now more profitable than trawling. They say that this season they have been able to make catches worth \$3,500 to \$4,000 in a few days. Large galvanized iron swivel hooks 50 fathoms apart on stout lines are baited with haddock. The sharks, from 10 to 14 feet long, are hauled aboard by means of derricks. Every part of the fish is used, flesh being salted for food and skin preserved as fine leather. While the shark lines are in the sea the fishermen shoot dolphins, which are used as food on silver fox farms.

## "CROC" GETS TROUSERS SEAT

While wading across the Limpopo River near Messina, South Africa, a picanniny was attacked by a crocodile, which grabbed him by the arm. When it released him for a moment the boy ran for shore, but the "croc" snapped at his coat tail only to get the seat of his trousers. The lad's arm was badly torn.

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