

Anne's Costume Catastrophe

Characters from L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*

"Oh, Diana, I had the most wonderful dream last night," Anne gushed, bursting into the schoolhouse on a bright September morning. "We were wood nymphs and —"

"No time for that!" Diana exclaimed. "Anne, there's to be a dance tonight! Nearly everyone will be attending. Be sure to wear your best costume!"

"Oh, how lovely! I will be sure to be there," Anne said decidedly. The day flew past and all Anne could think about was the party. Even geometry could not dampen her spirits. After school, Anne and Diana walked home together on Birch Path, talking about the party the whole way. When Anne got home, she told Marilla all about the dance.

"Dances are waste of time!" Marilla harrumphed. "Oh, Anne, don't look so depressed. If it really means that much to you, you can go, I suppose."

"Oh, thank you, Marilla! That dance means the world to me!" Anne exclaimed, her hands clasped tightly to her chest. "I have never been to a costume party before! I shall want to have the most ridiculous outfit of all!" With that, Anne began skipping up the stairs, dreaming up a crazy costume to wear. "I shall wear the pink hat with the feathers, and my old red, yellow, and purple play dress that Marilla made with old scraps, and Matthew's work boots — I'm sure he won't mind." Anne hurried into her cheerful east gable bedroom. She found the pieces of her costume and donned the ridiculous outfit. She smiled into the mirror. Her outfit was perfect! Anne hurried outside, where Matthew was already waiting with the buggy. "Oh, Matthew, don't you think my outfit is wonderfully ridiculous?" she asked.

"Well, now, that's not the kind of thing people normally wear to a party," Matthew admitted.

"Oh, but Matthew, it's a costume party! You're supposed to look ridiculous!" Anne exclaimed. Anne was unusually quiet for the rest of the drive — evidently she was too excited to speak. When they arrived, Anne stepped out of the buggy, gave Matthew a quick hug, and skipped gaily into the dance hall. All eyes were suddenly on her. Everyone else was wearing their best clothes — not one was dressed ridiculously like Anne. Somebody started laughing and Anne ran, crying, from the dance hall, her cheeks redder than her hair.

Anne tore through the black, chilly night, not even stopping to admire the Lake of Shining Waters' sparkly radiance or to be scared out of her wits by the make-believe ghosts and goblins of the Haunted Wood. She had to get home! When she arrived back at Green Gables, her face was even redder due to the cold, and her tears were falling faster than ever. She rushed inside, hurried up the stairs and into her room, and flung herself on her bed, weeping. A few minutes later, Matthew's slow footsteps could be heard on the stairs, and he entered Anne's room and gently patted her back. She let out a few last hiccupping sobs. "Matthew, I am so ashamed! I truly thought it was a costume party! I shall never be able to show my face in public again!" Anne said mournfully.

"Well, now, Anne, it can't be as bad as all that!" Matthew comforted.

"You weren't there, Matthew! My reputation is eternally ruined!"

"Well, Anne, I guess you're being too hard on yourself. Just try going to school tomorrow. Probably everyone will have forgotten about it by then."

Anne sighed. "If it will please you, Matthew, I shall muster all my courage and go tomorrow."

Matthew smiled and kissed Anne lightly on the cheek.

The next day was bright and colorful, and the air was wonderfully crisp and cool. Anne would have enjoyed it fully had she not been so nervous. She finally reached the schoolhouse and, after a deep breath, tentatively opened the door and stepped in, preparing to be mocked. But, much to her surprise and relief, she was wrong. As she entered, everyone flocked to her.

"You had a great costume, Anne!"

"Nobody could stop talking about it!" Even Josie Pye had a kind word to offer. Soon, Anne was laughing with them and had completely forgotten her embarrassment. A few days later, Marilla was talking with Mrs. Lynde.

"You've got a remarkable girl," the latter was saying. "Always getting herself into scrapes. I'll admit, in my opinion, she's the most entertaining person in all of Avonlea, that's what."