

MATTHEW. Something in her look. An' it's not just her red hair. I don't know what.

MARILLA. *(Leaving the window and returning to her work.)* Well I'm sure I don't either. You tell me when you find out.

MATTHEW. *(As the girls begin to come in, he starts from the window in terror.)* Oh! Oh, now!

MARILLA. What? Matthew!?

MATTHEW. *(Looking for a way to escape.)* Oh, well now! Oh! They're coming in! All of 'em!

(Unable to decide which way to go, he is caught standing beside MARILLA as ANNE, DIANA, JANE, JOSIE, and RUBY burst into the room. They greet MATTHEW and MARILLA easily, unaware of his consternation. He stays frozen, watching. ANNE is rummaging through the shawls on a hook.)

JANE. No, Josie!

DIANA. No!

JOSIE. I don't see why.

ANNE. It has to be Ruby or Jane.

JOSIE. Why?

ANNE. Because.

DIANA. Hello, Marilla. Hello, Matthew.

(Overlapping. MATTHEW sort of nods and tries to vanish.)

MARILLA. Girls.

RUBY/JOSIE. Hello, Mr. Cuthbert. Hello, Marilla.

JOSIE. *(Back to business.)* Why can't I?

RUBY. Because it's ridiculous, Josie. You don't look like a Fairy Queen. You don't look like a fairy at all.

JOSIE. Well, Anne's one of the attendants! A redheaded fairy is just as ridiculous as a fat fairy!

ANNE. *(Pulling out a shawl.)* Here, Di. Will this do?

DIANA. Oh, yes! That'll be perfect.

RUBY. Good! Let's go try it again.

JANE. Come on!

(They start to exit.)

DIANA. And we'll tie some white roses in your hair.

(They are gone. MATTHEW has an epiphany, but has no language for it.)

MATTHEW. It's!... It's!... Ummm!...

MARILLA. What, Matthew?

MATTHEW. *(He mimes dresses, sleeves, etc. Pointing to ANNE and the others.)* It's her...uhh... They...those others...they have... Colors!... and... Things!

MARILLA. What?

MATTHEW. *(Throwing on his coat and hat and heading for the door.)* She...Marilla, our Anne's brighter'n all of 'em! Why do you put her in things like a...like a...mouse!?

MARILLA. What are you talking about?

MATTHEW. *(Out the door, then back in. Finally got a word.)* Puffed Sleeves!

(He is gone. Lights. Music tag.)

Scene 2

(Lights up. A little later. The ladies notions section of a general store. MATTHEW is there, looking around utterly lost. RUBY and JOSIE giggle at him from a distance. A bell over the door rings as MRS. LYNDE enters.)

MRS. LYNDE. Matthew! Well, you're the last person I'd expect to find looking through the ribbons and thimbles.

MATTHEW. *(Greatly relieved to see her.)* Rachel! Oh... Well, now...

MRS. LYNDE. Matthew?

MATTHEW. Yes?

MRS. LYNDE. What is it you're wanting to buy?

MATTHEW. Oh... Oh, well, now...

MRS. LYNDE. Maybe I could help you.

MATTHEW. Oh! Oh, well, now! Well, I'm trying...that is...I'd like to find...

MRS. LYNDE. Yes?

MATTHEW. A... A dress...that is.

MRS. LYNDE. A dress?!

MATTHEW. Yes.

MRS. LYNDE. A dress.

MATTHEW. For Anne.

MRS. LYNDE. For Anne!

MATTHEW. Yes!

MRS. LYNDE. A dress for Anne.

MATTHEW. That's it!

MRS. LYNDE. You'd like me to help you pick out goods for a dress for Anne?

MATTHEW. That's *it* in a nutshell.

MRS. LYNDE. Well, I will.

MATTHEW. Thank you! Thank you!

(Starts to leave.)

MRS. LYNDE. Matthew? *(He stops.)* Have you something particular in mind?

(MRS. BARRY enters, unseen by MATTHEW from another part of the store.)

MATTHEW. Oh...well, now...

MRS. LYNDE. No? Well, I'll just go by my own judgment then. I believe a nice brown gloria would just suit Anne. When did you think you'd need it?

MATTHEW. Oh, well... I was thinking...Christmas.

MRS. LYNDE. Oh, now isn't that nice. Perhaps you'd like me to make it up for her, too.

MATTHEW. Well, now... Yes, I would. Are you sure it's not too much...

MRS. LYNDE. No, it isn't a mite of trouble. I like sewing.

MATTHEW. Well now, I'm much obliged...

MRS. LYNDE. Don't you mention it.

MATTHEW. ...and—and—I dunno—but I'd like— I think they make the sleeves different nowadays to what they used to be. If it wouldn't be asking too much I—I'd like them made in the new way.

MRS. LYNDE. Puffs? Of course. You needn't worry a speck more about it, Matthew. I'll make it up in the very latest fashion.

MATTHEW. *(Moving toward the door:)* Well, now. Thank you, Rachel. Thank you, very much.

MRS. LYNDE. Evening Matthew.

(He sees MRS. BARRY and shies as he exits. Bell rings. She speaks to MRS. BARRY.)

Well. It'll be a real satisfaction to see that poor child wearing something decent for once.

MRS. BARRY. And to think of Matthew taking notice of it!

MRS. LYNDE. That man is waking up after being asleep for over sixty years.

(Lights. Christmas music tag.)