

Anne's Impressions of Sunday School

by Lucy Maud Montgomery *from Anne of Green Gables*

Anne Shirley is a young orphan who has gone to live with the Cuthberts, Marilla and Matthew, on their farm called Green Gables. Anne has a great imagination which has helped her through her hard life. Matthew and Marilla are brother and sister, and they are new to the experience of raising a child. In this passage, Marilla has made some new clothes for Anne.

WELL, how do you like them?" said Marilla.

Anne was standing in the gable room, looking solemnly at three new dresses spread out on the bed. One was of snuffy colored gingham which Marilla had been tempted to buy from a peddler the preceding summer because it looked so serviceable; one was of black-and-white checkered sateen which she had picked up at a bargain counter in the winter; and one was a stiff print of an ugly blue shade which she had purchased that week at a Carmody store.

She had made them up herself, and they were all made alike—plain skirts full'd tightly to plain waists, with sleeves as plain as waist and skirt and tight as sleeves could be.

"I'll imagine that I like them," said Anne soberly.

"I don't want you to imagine it," said Marilla, offended. "Oh, I can see you don't like the dresses! What is the matter with them? Aren't they neat and clean and new?"

"Yes."

"Then why don't you like them?"

"They're—they're not—pretty," said Anne reluctantly.

"Pretty!" Marilla sniffed. "I didn't trouble my head about getting pretty dresses for you. I don't believe in pampering vanity, Anne, I'll tell you that right off. Those dresses are good, sensible, serviceable dresses, without any frills or furbelows about them, and they're all you'll get this summer. The brown gingham and the blue print will do you for school when you begin to go. The sateen is for church and Sunday school. I'll expect you to keep them neat and clean and not to tear them. I should think you'd be grateful to get most anything after those skimpy wincey things you've been wearing."

"Oh, I am grateful," protested Anne. "But I'd be ever so much gratefuller if—if you'd made just one of them with puffed sleeves. Puffed sleeves are so fashionable now. It would give me such a thrill, Marilla, just to wear a dress with puffed sleeves."

“Well, you’ll have to do without your thrill. I hadn’t any material to waste on puffed sleeves. I think they are ridiculous-looking things anyhow. I prefer the plain, sensible ones.”

“But I’d rather look ridiculous when everybody else does than plain and sensible all by myself,” persisted Anne mournfully.

“Trust you for that! Well, hang those dresses carefully up in your closet, and then sit down and learn the Sunday school lesson. I got a quarterly from Mr. Bell for you and you’ll go to Sunday school tomorrow,” said Marilla, disappearing downstairs in high dudgeon.

Anne clasped her hands and looked at the dresses.

“I did hope there would be a white one with puffed sleeves,” she whispered disconsolately. “I prayed for one, but I didn’t much expect it on that account. I didn’t suppose God would have time to bother about a little orphan girl’s dress. I knew I’d just have to depend on Marilla for it. Well, fortunately I can imagine that one of them is of snow-white muslin with lovely lace frills and three-puffed sleeves.”

Questions

1. Why did Anne not like her dresses?
2. What did Anne want one of her dresses to look like?
3. What does *offended* mean here: "'I don't want you to imagine it,' said Marilla, offended. 'Oh, I can see you don't like the dresses!'"
4. Do you think Anne should have been happy with her new dresses? Why or why not?