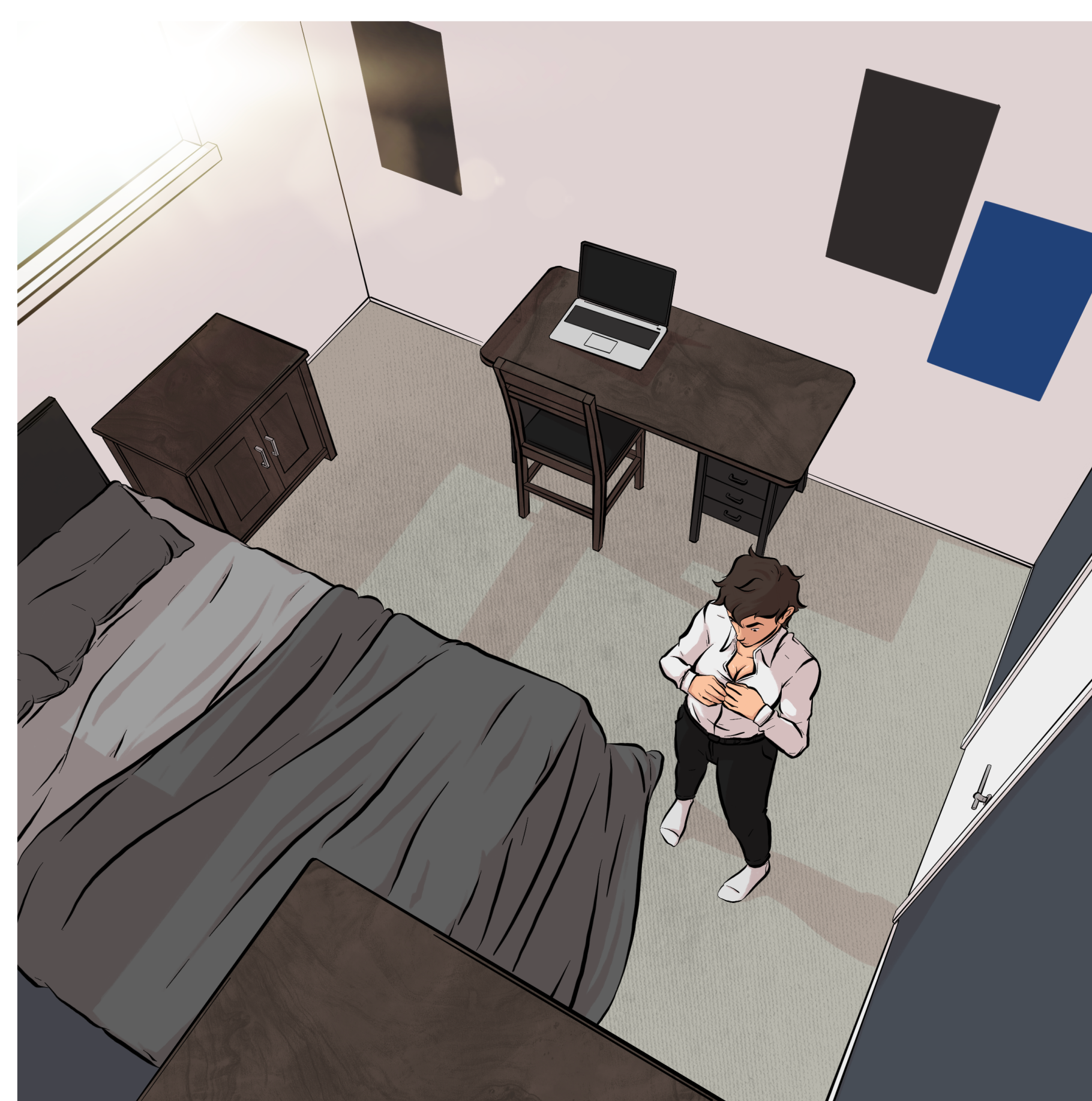


TAYLOR ♂ ♀ WOMADE

EPIISODE 1



Taylor Hughes stood in his bedroom, struggling to button the dress shirt he hadn't worn in two years. "Damn," he muttered, his chest straining against the fabric. "You're supposed to be shrinking!"

The "you" were his boobs. Tits. Knockers. Funbags. Whatever synonym was your favorite, his chest fit the bill.

Sure, the doctors called his condition "gynecomastia," but that was only to make him—and other guys in his position—feel better. But, as always, Taylor had done his homework. His breasts were anatomically identical to those of a girl his age. The only difference? His were significantly larger than average.

"Mom!" he yelled through his bedroom door. "Can you bring me a bigger shirt?"

"Sorry, hun, that's the biggest you have," his mother called back.

"Great," Taylor moaned. "Okay, it's cotton, it'll stretch..." Once again, he tugged his button-down shirt together, but it seemed his boobs had chosen that day to grow just a bit more.

The breast growth began at puberty and had just never stopped. At age fifteen, his chest was already a B cup. At sixteen, it was a C. By seventeen, it was a solid D. And now, at eighteen? Well, he hadn't had the heart to measure lately. And the cruelest twist of all? Although he'd been walloped by the Titty Fairy, puberty hadn't made up for it with big muscles, a beard, or anything to make him look manly. Taylor was just a skinny, short guy with an embarrassing amount of cleavage.

"Wouldn't you rather be smart than strong?" Mom often asked him.

"Why not both?" he'd reply.

Of course, she'd taken him to the doctor when the gynecomastia began. But that was no help. All the tests only revealed that his boobs were a natural result of puberty. There was no genetic defect, and the condition wasn't the because of a medication or illness. The doctor even said this kind of "development" wasn't uncommon and usually passed after adolescence.

Clearly, the doc had no idea what he was talking about.

And so, throughout high school, Taylor hid his boobs under loose sweaters and hoodies. Of course, the jocks and cheerleaders still bullied him, but at least it was for his shabby appearance rather than his tits. Now, graduation was finally approaching, and he'd soon be free of those assholes for good.

Unless he couldn't get his stupid shirt to fit right!



Because today was an extraordinary day: The National Scholastic Awards, where a dozen lucky students would win a \$50,000 scholarship based on their academic achievements. Taylor's science teacher, Ms. Russell, had nominated him, and he couldn't afford to miss this opportunity. Mom was the best, but she'd been working two jobs just to put food on the table.

"Taylor?" his mother asked as she knocked on the door. "Are you ready?"

"Almost," he replied. "Just a second."

He sucked in his chest and tried to pull the button-down closed again. This time, by some physics-defying miracle, the fibers stretched just enough to close the gap. He quickly fastened the buttons and put on the vest that had belonged to his father before he died. Fortunately, dad had been a big man, and the vest, unlike the shirt, fit snugly over his chest.

"What do you think?" he said, opening the door. "Pretty sharp, right?"

Taylor's mother was a stunning woman. At least, that's what his jerk friends always said (in less polite terms). She'd been a sorority girl and still looked like one at age forty but for a few gray hairs. Taylor had inherited her wavy dark hair and brown eyes—as well as, it seemed, her cup size.

"Wow," Mom exclaimed, frowning. "You sure you want to wear that vest, honey? It's...um...pretty tight."

"What are you talking about?" Taylor tugged at the vest. "It's fine! And it belonged to dad, so..."

She bit her lower lip. "Well, you just look so...bulky."

"What?" He turned to the mirror and stared at his reflection. "No, I...I look..."

"Honey," Mom said carefully. "I think we need to accept that your old clothes just don't fit anymore."

He lowered his gaze. "What do you mean? It's on, isn't it? It's just a little tight around—you know—my chest."

"Taylor, it's not just tight. I'm afraid a button will pop off and put someone's eye out."

Taylor saw her brace for the explosion. Once, he might've cursed and slammed the door, but those outbursts didn't seem to happen anymore. Instead, his eyes welled up with tears. "I hate these stupid things!" he sobbed, clutching his chest. "I'm already eighteen, when will they go away?"

"Remember, the doctor said another year," she said, patting his arm. "Maybe longer."

"What am I going to do?" he sighed. "I usually just wear my hoodie, but



the National Scholastic Awards rules say we have to dress up! And if I don't go, my life is ruined."

"My poor Taylor," she said, pulling him in for a hug. "You know what? I have an idea..."

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Taylor shook his head, his eyes wide with fear. "No way, I'm not doing it."

"Just try it on," Mom said. "What's the harm?"

"That's Wendy's! I'm not wearing my sister's clothes. You think I'm some kind of weirdo?"

She switched to her stern mom-voice. "Taylor Michael Hughes, nothing else in your closet fits, and we need to leave in an hour. I can make the best of a bad situation, but you need to trust me. Put on the dress."

Taylor made a disgusted sound and grabbed the gown. "This is nuts."

"Don't forget these," she said, holding up a pair of pantyhose. "They go on first."

Taylor's head swam as he gazed at the nylons. "Seriously?"

Mom rolled her eyes. "Yes, seriously. Unless you want to shave your legs."

Taylor grunted, grabbed the hose and stormed into his room, making sure to slam the door. He then sat on his bed and held the gown against his body. God, it didn't even have sleeves!

He yelled at the door, "I'm not wearing this!"

"Honey, come on," Mom said. "It's too late to find anything else."

"But...but...it's...a *dress!*" Taylor protested. "It's my *sister's* dress!"

"Wendy's not even here. It's just us. Just wear the dress for today and then you can get on with your life. I'm just trying to help you out."

He let out a deep sigh. Maybe he could just put it on long enough for mom to see that he looked like a freak. Then she'd realize how ridiculous this was, and they'd run out and buy something that actually fit. That would be the adult thing to do, right?

Taylor stared down at his legs and chewed the inside of his cheek. They weren't all that hairy, but he supposed the pantyhose would help. Before he could change his mind, he slipped both legs in and carefully shimmied them up. The feel of the nylon on his skin made him feel...weird.

Finally, Taylor picked up the dress, inhaled deeply, and pulled it over his head. *Please don't fit...*

The dress slipped on easily and fell to his thighs. It was a little snug around the waist, but not too bad. He turned to the mirror—



—and gasped in surprise at the strange young lady who looked back at him.

The dress looked perfect. Better even than it would've looked on Wendy. Taylor had the body for it.

A strange, twisting horror swirled in his stomach. It was suddenly difficult to breathe. Tears began streaming down his cheeks, and he let out a plaintive, sobbing sound.

"Taylor?" There was a quick knock, and then Mom entered. "Oh," she exclaimed, somewhat stunned.

He looked up at her. "I look like a girl."

Regaining her composure, she clapped. "Good! We might pull this off. After all, Taylor could be a girl's name."

"Do you think anybody will recognize me?"

"Honey, with a chest like that, nobody will look at your face. All the college recruiters will see is a coed with an impressive GPA."

"And a great rack," Taylor added, then cry-laughed and took a calming breath. "Okay. It's just one day, I can do this. It's like I'm role-playing."

"Yes, exactly," Mom said. "And then, we'll go out and get you some new clothes that fit, and you'll be back to your old self."

"Okay." Taylor gave his mother a reassuring smile. "That sounds good."

"In the meantime..." Mom turned his shoulders to face the mirror. "A little mascara, lipstick, and you're good to go!"

"What?" Taylor cried. "I don't want to wear makeup!"

"Oh, honey," she said. "You have to look presentable—and convincing—and any girl your age wears makeup, especially to a formal event. Don't worry, I'll go easy. But I absolutely need to do something about those hedgerows you call eyebrows."

Taylor's heart pounded in his chest. "Fine, just—just don't go overboard, okay?"

"Don't worry, everything will be okay. And now I'm glad you let your hair grow out a little. It should look nice with a little shaping. Now, come to my bedroom and let me do my magic."

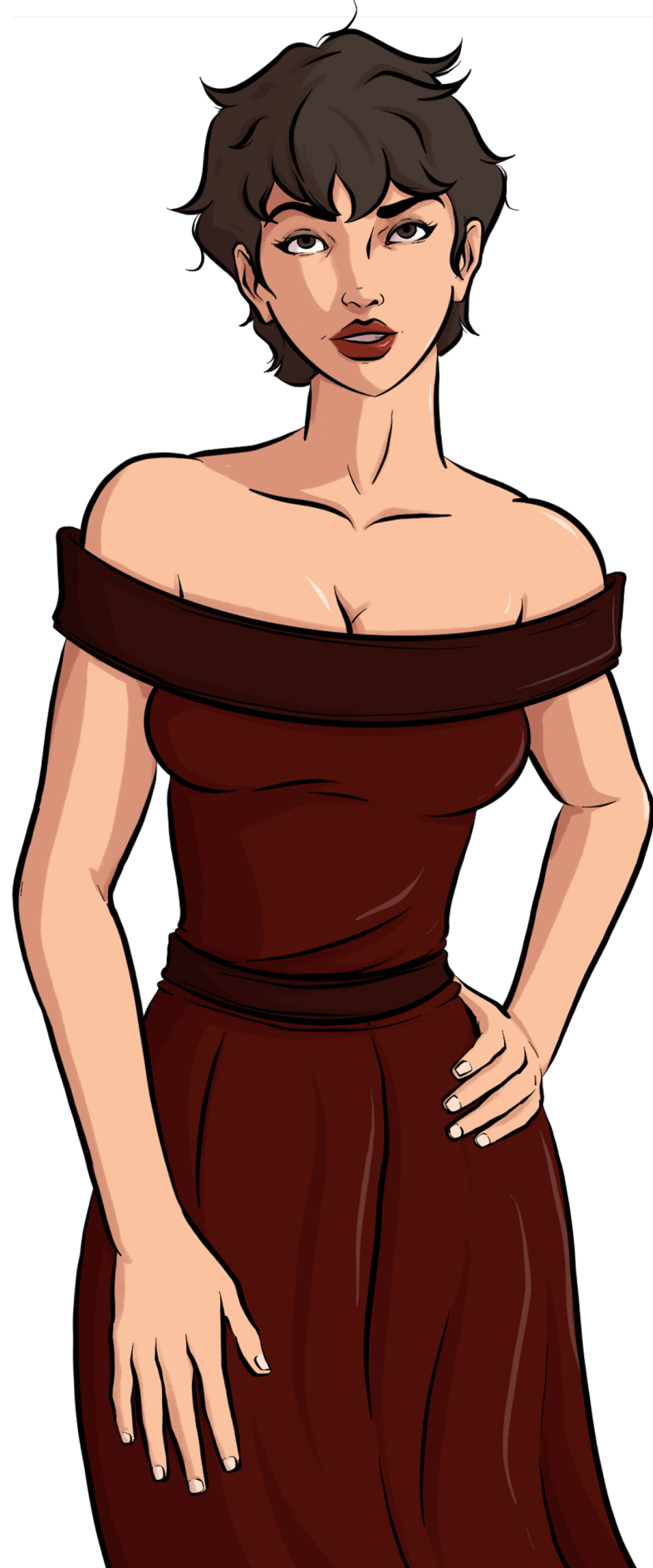
Suddenly, Taylor found himself seated in mom's makeup chair, peering into the mirror with frightened fascination as she went to work. She applied foundation, eyeshadow, blush, lipstick, and a slew of other products that left Taylor feeling a little dazed and a lot weird. After a while, she stepped back and circled him, inspecting her handiwork. In the mirror, a lovely, if slightly androgynous young woman gazed back at him. Well, androgynous except for the two very feminine attributes on display.

"All right," Mom said. "You're all set. You're beautiful, honey."

Taylor groaned. "That's the last thing I ever wanted to hear you say."

"Well, it's true. And, don't tell Wendy, but I think you're even more beautiful than she is."

"Great," Taylor deadpanned.



“Oh!” Mom said. “I almost forgot. Let me get your shoes.” She hurried away, leaving Taylor alone with his thoughts and the mirror.

Why is she so enthusiastic about this? he wondered. *I guess she just misses having Wendy around. They used to go shopping all the time, paint each other’s nails, and do all that other girly stuff.*

Mom returned from his sister’s bedroom with a pair of black pumps. “Here,” she said. “These will go perfectly with your dress.”

His stomach sank. “Mom, no.”

“Well, you can’t wear sneakers. Don’t worry, they only have a two-inch heel. They’re cute, too.” Mom smiled. “I promise you’ll get the hang of them in no time.”

Taylor looked at them with disgust but slipped them on. “I always said Wendy had big feet for a girl,” he joked, trying to hide the sinking feeling in his stomach.

“Now, practice makes perfect,” Mom chirped. “We don’t want you to fall on your face when you’re getting your award.”

It was awkward, but with Mom’s instructions, Taylor quickly mastered the rhythm of “the walk,” as she called it, and soon he was strutting down the hall, heels clacking against the tile with easy grace.

Mom applauded. “You’re a natural!”

“No!” Taylor cried. “I’m just, uh, getting into character.”

She smiled. “Of course. All right, we’d better get moving if we don’t want to be late. Here, let me get a picture with my phone.”

“Mom!” he shouted. “I don’t want a picture of me dressed like...like this floating around.”

“Pretty please? You know how much I love makeovers, and I think this is my best one ever. I want to remember it. Just one, okay?”

Taylor clenched his teeth. “All right, but only if you promise not to show it to anyone.”

“Pinky swear.”

“Ugh, okay. But hurry up.” He quickly posed with his chin held high, hand on his hip, and what he hoped was a goofy smile on his face.

“Thank you, honey. Okay! Now we’d really better go.”

It was a warm spring evening, and the air had the crisp scent of new life. Taylor struggled to keep his balance on the uneven pavement as they walked to their old minivan parked in the driveway.

Suddenly, he heard a familiar voice. “Hello there, Kristin! Headed out?”

It was Mr. Gower, their next-door neighbor, an older man who seemed friendly enough. Mom nodded. “Yep.”

Mr. Gower looked Taylor up and down, his eyes lingering on his chest. “Hey now, is that Wendy back for a visit from sunny Florida? Oh, and you cut your hair! I hope you didn’t turn—”



Mortified by Mr. Gower's lustful gaze, Taylor turned beet red and scrambled into the minivan, slamming the door with more force than was strictly necessary.

"Sorry, we're running late!" Mom said and climbed in after him.

"Have a great time, ladies, wherever you're going," Mr. Gower shouted as they pulled out of the driveway.

Taylor shuddered as they pulled away. "He was looking at me, Mom. I mean, not normally, but...as if he wanted to..."

"He's an old creep," Mom said. "He's always watching me when I'm gardening, and Wendy had it even worse."

"Wow. I always thought Mr. Gower was nice. No one should have to put up with that kind of thing."

His mother patted his hand. "You're absolutely right. You know, I think this little day of *role-playing* will be very educational. I mean, I know you'd never harass a girl, but it'll be good for you to have...I don't know...an appreciation for what women go through on a daily basis."

"Sure," he replied, not at all sure he agreed.

"All right," she said. "Next stop, the National Scholastic Awards. And after that... Well, who's at the top of your list today? Harvard?"

Taylor smiled despite the strange situation. "Nah. Harvard is so yesterday. Now I'm thinking MIT."

Mom giggled. "I never imagined a daughter of mine would be smart enough to be accepted to MIT." When she saw his pained expression, she laughed again. "Sorry, I shouldn't tease. But, listen, no matter what happens at the awards, I'm really proud of you. And I love you."

"I love you, too."

They drove the rest of the way in silence. Taylor tried to adjust to his new appearance, but every glimpse of himself in the side mirror made him feel queasy.

It's just for tonight, he thought desperately. That's all. If I can get through high school with boobs, I can get through one night in a dress.