

ADULTS ONLY

128 pages 34 illustrations

A HIGH-HEELED HALLOWEEN

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack



TRANSGENDER STORIES OF THE
SUPERNATURAL



J O E S I X P A C K

***A HIGH-
HEELED
HALLOWEEN***

**Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack
A Stories of the Supernatural story**



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Printed in the United States of America.

j6p@sixpacksite.com
www.sixpacksite.com

A HIGH-HEELED HALLOWEEN

A SPIRITED ENCOUNTER



Downtown, there's a costume shop that isn't very hard to find. It's a chain store, brightly lit, clean and spacious. At a discount, they offer the latest trendy items for parties, birthdays and most of all — Halloween. Tom had just dropped in for a moment to take a look, and get some ideas. He had just come from his stockbroker job, still in his best navy blue suit with the red power tie, as he perused what was for sale. "Is there a price on this?" He asked the lone clerk at the desk.

The clerk, a bespectacled man with no trace of a hairline and an obvious affectation for bow ties, examined the plastic-wrapped package Tom had brought from the shelf.

The man, old but not elderly, examined the pack, flipping it over one way and then the other. "Doesn't have a price tag," he said.

Tom nodded. "That's why I was asking."

"Let's see. Vampire costume." He checked a list nearby. "I don't have... Oh, here it is, \$59.95."

"Steep," Tom said.

The clerk shrugged. "It costs what it costs. But you don't want that one. That's not the costume for you. You're more adventurous than that." He walked out from behind his desk and over to the side, where he picked a package off the shelf. "Try this one. Much more daring than a dusty old vampire."

Tom guffawed. "Cheerleader costume? Dress up in a skirt? Hardly." He tried to toss it right back on the shelf where it came from, but the clerk was in the way.

"Don't be so quick, there," said the bow-tied man. "You're getting this for a party, I'd wager. An office party. Which do you think people will remember? One of six vampires or the one man in the cheerleader costume?"

"I want to be remembered for the right things, not for looking like a mental case," Tom said.

"Think about it. Plus, I can give you a discount."

"This wouldn't even fit me," Tom said, hoping it would be evident that his well-maintained triathlon-ready physique was much larger than a girl's costume could hold.

“One size fits all,” the clerk said, “guaranteed.”

Tom didn't believe that for a second. He pressed the package into the clerk's hands. “I was just looking for ideas,” Tom said, as he turned around and exited. “Wasn't going to buy anything.”



The clerk was at his desk the very next day when Tom came back into the store. It was about two in the afternoon, exactly when Tom figured the place would be empty, and it was. He was just hoping a different employee would be working the desk, so he could do this without feeling like a fool.

Tom walked over to the shelf and plucked the same cheerleader costume package off the shelf and brought it to the desk. He did his best job of looking cool and disaffected.

“Gonna get it after all, huh?” The clerk inquired.

“I don't have time to fuss. I can't waste my time thinking about something as silly as a Halloween costume.”

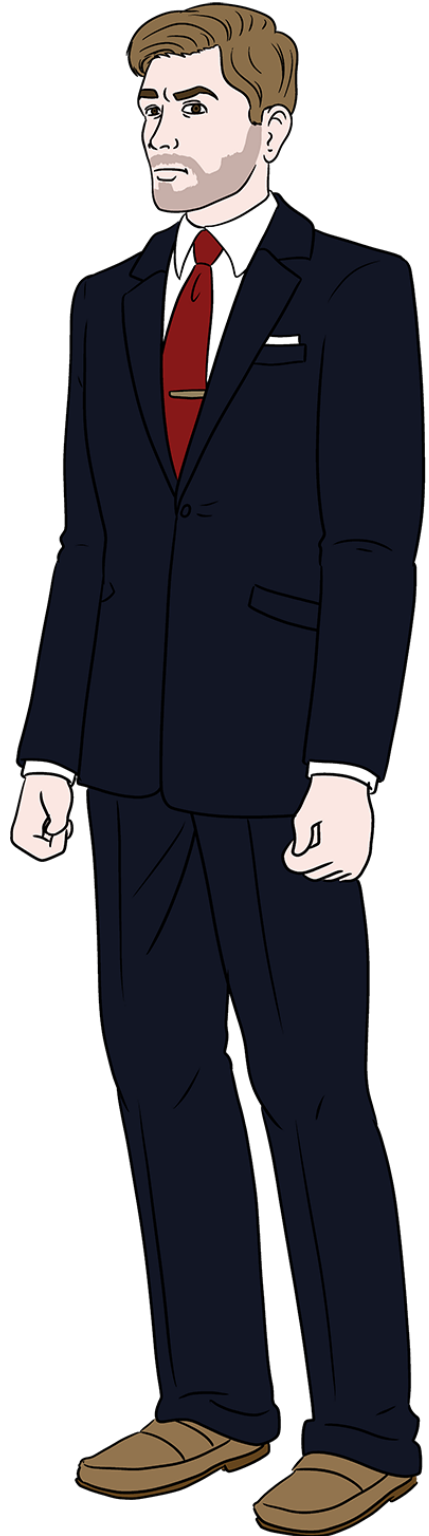
“Oh I completely understand. No sense getting all bent out of shape over one day of the year.”

“Exactly.”

“Now this costume doesn't come with the shoes. Do want the shoes?”

“I can find something at home. I need to get back to work.”

The clerk accepted the credit card the stockbroker handed over. “Tomas Farnsworth” was the name on it. “Member



since 2003.”

“Just need approval and a signature,” the clerk said, running the card through the reader. “Now you want to use the clips inside the wig, it’ll keep it on tighter.”

Tom’s hair was short, with a thick wave at the top. He looked at the long, blonde, curly wig with the built-in ponytail. “Yeah, I don’t think that’ll work. Can I use glue?”

“I wouldn’t try it. It’ll rip your real hair right out when you take it off. There’s still a couple of weeks until Halloween, I’d just let your hair grow out a little. The clips will work fine by the time you’re going to the party.”

“Grow my hair out in two weeks?” Tom knew how slowly hair grew. It was a ridiculous suggestion.

“And of course, you’ll want to shave your legs and face as closely as possible for the big night. It wouldn’t hurt to practice a little. Especially if you want to use some makeup. It’s best not to leave that to the last second.”

“Yeah, I think I can handle it,” Tom said, dismissively. He signed his receipt and handed it back to the clerk.

“Do you like sweaters? The cheerleader uniform has a warm, fluffy sweater.”

“Sweaters? It’s seventy degrees outside.”

“By the time Halloween comes around, you’ll thank yourself for having a nice sweater to wear.”

“I’m not a sweater person,” Tom said, adjusting his gold cufflinks.

The clerk bagged the costume up and handed it over. “And the chest, you’ll want to stuff it with...”

“Got it, thanks,” Tom said, cutting him off. He checked his phone for messages as he left the shop.



“Hello?” The woman called out into the costume store. It was empty. “Hello?”

“Yes!” Said the clerk, who emerged from the rack of cheap, loud costumes that packed the shop from wall to wall. “What can I help you with, young lady?”

The woman was in a business suit, grey, with crisply cut no-nonsense medium length dark hair, a phone in one hand and a second phone in the other. In fact, even if she was only in her mid-twenties, she looked nothing like a young lady. She looked rather deliberately like the professional businesswoman she saw herself to be. “My husband purchased a costume from you two days ago. A cheerleader costume? God knows what he was thinking.”

“About yay high?” The clerk said, raising his hand to a vague height of six feet tall. “Short hair, business suit? Red tie?”

“Yes. That was him.” The woman looked back and forth between her two phones, decided one was not necessary and pocketed it. “I’d like to return it.”

“Costumes are not returnable,” the clerk said, gesturing his hand towards the large, plainly visible and insistent sign that read “all sales final” on it.

“I want my money back,” she stated in a serious tone she seemed well practiced in.

“It’s not in my power. Only my manager can make that call.”

“I want to see your manager.”

“He’s in another store today. Fairmont Mall. It’s just a quick thirty minute drive.”

“This is such an inconvenience! I have meetings!”

“Didn’t your husband like the costume?”

“He couldn’t even remember why he had bought it.”

“Ah. Well, I guess he changed his mind. I can do an exchange if you’d like. But I need the receipt.”

“My husband has it. He’s parking the car.”

“Can I ask why you don’t like the costume? I thought it was a unique and inspired choice.”

“Unique?” Tom’s wife said, adding a subtle snort, then pushing back stray hair from her face. “The last thing either Tom or I need is to make waves. His job at the firm is based on being as unassuming and as normal as everyone else. The last thing his career needs is a reputation as a free thinker.”

“Well, I’ve seen that costume make a real difference for people like Tom. Now, if you don’t mind me saying so... What did you say your name was?”

“I didn’t.”

“Gwen, yes, that’s a lovely name. If you don’t mind me saying so, just fitting in and keeping your head low is no way to make a lasting impression. Even someone who has to maintain a solid reputation like Tom has to stand out once and a while. Does that make sense?”

“Well, yes...”

“You can’t hide in a crowd and still hope for advancement and promotion. Anything that helps leave leave even the tiniest influence on someone’s mind is going to do nothing but help.”

“Halloween is a rare opportunity to make the right kind of impression. Don’t let that slip by.”

“I don’t think...” Gwen tried to say.

“Shush now. Let the old clerk show you how to really make the right impression.”

Ten minutes later the bells on the door tinkled. “Gwen?” Said a voice. It was Tom, looking a little pressed for time. “We gotta go, I parked in the handicapped spot. Have you returned it yet?”

“Hello, Tom!” the clerk said, welcoming his customer back to his store. “Just ringing up Gwen’s purchases right now.”

“Purchases?” Tom said, advancing on the check-out desk where his wife had a small pile of items.

“Well, we had to get the shoes for the cheer uniform, Tom.” Gwen was signing the receipt. “I’m surprised you didn’t get them when you bought the costume. And the pom-poms are a must.”

“I thought you were going to return this.”

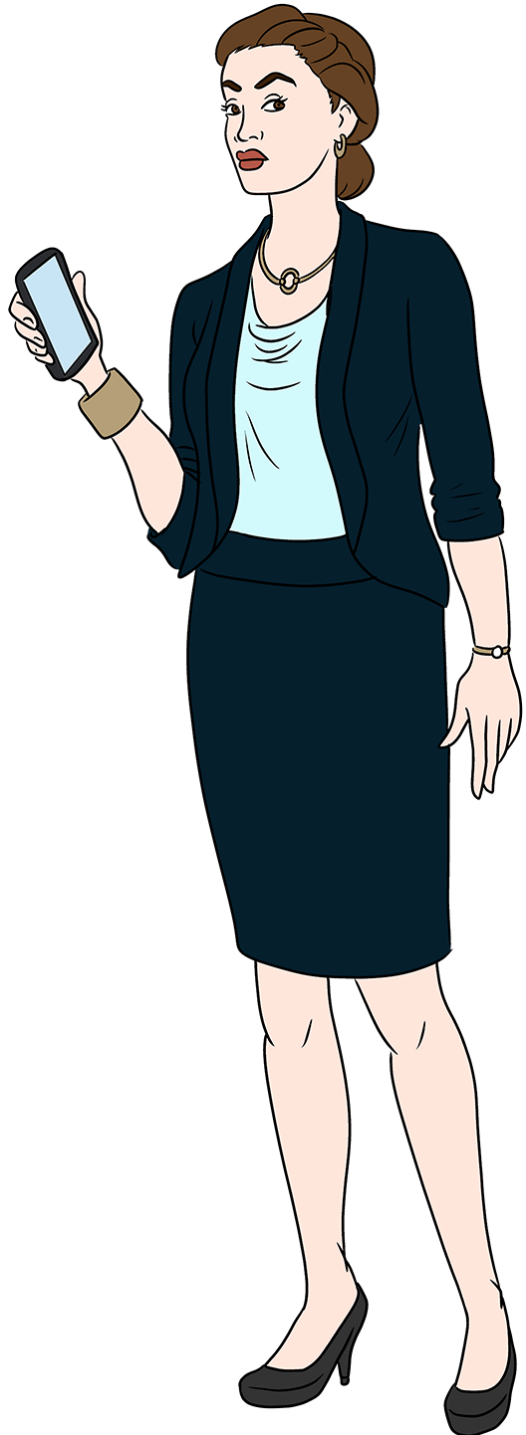
“We can’t.” She pointed to the large ‘no refund’ sign. “So we have to make the best of it.”

“Did you even ask?”

“Tom, of course I asked. The manager’s not here, so it can’t be helped.”

Tom looked quizzically over the the clerk, who was busy bagging up the new items with a grin on his face. He then looked at his wife’s face which was smiling. Knowing her as she did, and her all-business attitude, seeing her smile was kind of creepy and unsettling.

“So, now you *want* me to dress up as a cheerleader?” Tom asked.



“That’s not how we discussed it.”

“Just don't worry about, honey,” Gwen said. She turned to her husband and tightened his tie. “It’s just a costume, after all. Which do you think people will remember? One of six vampires or the one man in the cheerleader costume?”

Tom wasn't sure what to make of that, as it was the exact same line the clerk had fed him when he first came into the shop. She had obviously fallen for his argument.

“And look! I got myself a costume to go with yours,” Gwen said.

Tom peered over the top of his shorter wife’s head to look at what she was talking about. She was pointing to a package labeled ‘Crazy Stage Mother Costume.’ “See?” Gwen said. “It comes with a pair of spandex leopard print dress, big wig, huge earrings, one of those ridiculously huge mom purses...”

“Really? Are you sure?” Tom asked, his face scrunched in uncertainty.

“I’m going to get one of those hideous jackets that says ‘Don't mess with me I’m a Cheer Mom.’” Gwen said with a mischievous look on her face. “It’ll be *deliciously* tacky.”

“I barely even fit in my costume. I’m going to look like a fool.”

“You’ll look like you’re in a costume. That’s the point. We might as well have some fun with it.”

“You’ve married a wise woman, Tim,” the clerk said, handing over the bag full of costume items. “Oh, now that you’re here, maybe we should double check the shoes before you leave.”

“I’m a size 12. No need to check. I’ve always been a size 12.”

“In a women’s size?” Gwen asked.

“Fine, let’s check.”

Tom took a seat and undid the laces on his shiny black leather dress shoes. The clerk unwrapped one of the white sneakers from the box and fit it on Tom’s dress-sock-covered foot. “They look big on you,” he said.

“Yeah, they’re a bit big. Roomy in the toe.”

Gwen checked the box. “Did we do the conversion right? Size 14 women is a men’s size 12, isn’t it?”

“We’ll try something smaller.”

“I’m a size 12,” Tom insisted, as a matter of pride.

“Let’s try these.” The clerk slipped them on Tom’s feet and tied them up. “How do those feel?”

“They... They fit. They feel okay.” Tom stood up and tested them out. “What size are these?”

“Size ten,” Gwen said, reading the number on the box.

Tom shrugged. "Must be cheap Chinese shoes. Way off in terms of size." He sat, untied them and took them off.

Gwen gave the box a second look. When she had said they were size ten, she was reading the women's size. For men, these were size 8. She read it five times, and still figured she was mis-reading it.

The clerk handed Tom his dress shoe back. "Good thing we checked that out. Saved you a trip."

"I guess," Tom said. He put his shoe back on, laced it up and stood. "These feel huge on me now." He took a step forward and the shoe nearly fell off his foot. He wound up wearing the white sneakers out of the store.

"Don't forget to leave a review on Freesquirt," the clerk said.

"Foursquare," Tom corrected.

"Gesundheit."



It was just a few days later when Tom begrudgingly returned to the small costume store. He wasn't sure he should even come back, but he had some questions that he needed the answers to.

Problem was, he couldn't find the clerk who worked there.

"He's off," the woman at the desk said, when asked.

"I see. Yes. Is he going to be back soon?"

The woman who was working on this day was as laconic as a person could be without lapsing into a coma. She was flipping through pages of a magazine at a regular rate, not paying any attention to it. "I'm not allowed to discuss work schedules, as per company policy."

"Well then, maybe you can help me. I bought these shoes here the other day, to go with a costume..."

"No refunds," the lady said.

"We've covered that. I'm not looking for a return. I had a question about the shoes."

The woman put down the magazine she was flipping through. "I'd be more than happy to answer your questions, sir," she said, taxed with the effort of having to move her eyes up to look at Tom. Her sour expression made it clear to Tom that he only had a couple of attempts before this woman was going to give up and go back to her page-flipping duties.

"The shoes I was sold. They don't have any effect on the size of the feet, do they?"

“I don't follow you, sir.”

Tom tried to look confident. “You see, every pair of shoes I have don't fit me anymore. Ever since I tried on these dumb shoes, all my others feel too big. Either my feet have shrunk, which is, as we know, impossible, or... Well, I'm not sure what else could explain it, but now my feet feel too small for all my shoes.”

“We partner with only reputable manufacturers for our products, sir.”

“I think maybe it's desensitized my feet. Some kind of chemical leeching into my skin, make my feet feel like...”

“Sir, if you have a complaint about the quality of one of our products, I'd be happy to give you the address of our corporate...”

“The shoes have done something to my feet. I don't know what. Now I can only wear these stupid cheerleader shoes...” He looked down at the all-white pair of sneakers on his feet, which looked ridiculous with his dark navy blue suit.

The woman at the desk hadn't changed her expression one bit. “We have a complaint form I can give you.”

“No, that's not what I'm saying. These shoes have done something to me, and I just want to know what.”

“Sir, I can direct you to our website where we...”

“You don't know anything do, you?”

“I'll have to ask you to leave if you're going to be abusive.”

“I want to talk to the clerk who was working here when I bought the shoes. Bow tie. Glasses. He's got the answers, I know he does.”

“Sir...”

“I know what you're going to say, and I already saw a doctor. Practically laughed me out of his office. He told me I was crazy. Crazy! Shoes can't change your feet, he told me.”

“If you want to leave the shoes here, sir, I can have my manager look at them and then contact you.”

“I... I don't think that'll work,” Tom said. “They're the only shoes I have with me.”

“Sir...”

“You want to know why I keep wearing them, don't you? Well, it just so happens they're very comfortable. Because of whatever else they're doing to my feet, they've made me an addict! I have to wear these shoes!”

Tom quickly and adeptly surmised that with his last statement, he had just lost any credibility he had, and whatever arguments he could levy were now moot. He sounded insane. Not merely unhinged, but certifiably insane.

He and the woman at the desk exchanged a look for a few seconds.

“I’ll be back,” Tom said.

He could feel the disapproving eyes of the minimum-wage retail employee as he scuffled away, the cuffs of his pants rubbing on the ground.



It was the next Saturday when Tom visited the costume shop yet again, and although the old clerk was on duty this time, he didn't recognize his customer.

“No, I’m sorry, I can't place the face,” the clerk said.

“Tom Farnswerth. You sold me the cheerleader costume. You sold my wife that weird stage mother costume. It was only a few days ago!”

It was easy to understand why the clerk didn't recognize Tom, as he was no longer in his intimidating power suit, when he looked for all the world like a man who could ruin your life with a single phone call. Today, he was in a sweater and khaki shorts.

“I sell a lot of costumes, young man. Why, I sold three just today. Halloween’s coming up, you know.”

“Yes, I own a calendar. Listen, I need to ask you a couple of questions. First...”

The clerk ignored him and walked past. “Hold on, I have a customer.”

“Wait! I have... Questions...” But it was too late for Tom to object, as the clerk was already welcoming a teenage boy who had wandered into the store, and Tom had to slump his shoulders at being ignored.

It wasn't that hard to dismiss Tom, either, as without his suit, he was a far less imposing figure. Outside of his comfort zone, Tom felt just as out of place as he looked. He didn't do “casual” well, and was much more comfortable behind his desk or leading a meeting. His loose sweater and sagging shorts looked like they were made for someone much bigger than him. In fact, he appeared to be holding them up at the belt with one of his hands.

“I... I...” Tom was at a loss, as he desperately wanted to talk to the clerk, but he also didn't want anyone to overhear what he had to say. He was going to have to be patient until the clerk was available again.

Fortunately, it wasn't long before the teen's costume purchase was being rung up and bagged. “I don't know about this,” the kid said.

“Trust me,” the clerk said, with a comforting smile. “It may be a little unusual at first blush, but you'll be the hit of the party in that costume.”

The boy did not appear to be particularly at ease with his decision. “Cinderella. Why didn't I go shopping when there were more choices. Now I'm stuck as Cinderella.”

“You'll make a wonderful Cinderella. I'll bet you'll have a full dance card all night.”

“What's a dance card?”

“You young kids these days.” He handed over the bag, bursting over with sparkling blue fabric that would be the boy's dress for halloween. The kid took it and walked towards the door, stopped, and turned back around.

“Trust me!” the clerk said again, before the boy had a chance to speak.

Then the kid turned back around and left.

“Now, what costume were looking for?” The clerk asked Tom.

“No. I wasn't looking for a costume. I wanted to ask you about the costume I already bought.”

The clerk was putting his things in order at the register. “Well there are no...”

“No returns, yes, I already know that. What I want to know is if anyone had complained about any unusual effects from the costumes.”

“What kind of effects?”

“Well, at first I thought maybe the shoes had somehow made my feet...”

The clerk snapped his fingers in recognition. “Now I place you. You came in with your brother.”

“My wife.”

“Nice lady. Did you do something with your hair?”

Tom was very self-conscious about his lengthening hair, which he desperately wanted to cut, but his wife had been



staunchly against it. It was well over his ears, but he had it combed back to try and look short. He was also sure that it was now a shade or two lighter, as well. "I didn't do anything to my hair!" He objected.

"Well keep not doing anything, then. It suits you."

"Anyway, I bought a cheerleader costume for Halloween."

"You say you were having problems with the shoes?" The clerk asked. "Those shoes you have on now?"

Indeed, Tom was wearing the white sneakers he had bought as part of the costume. He had worn nothing but since he had purchased them.

"Yeah, I guess these are those shoes. But actually, I really love these. They're so comfortable, I never take them off." Tom hiked up his shorts, as they were drooping down a little. "My problem is with the uniform itself."

"Well, what seems to be the problem?"

"I think it's made me sick. I'm sure I'm losing weight."

"Sick? You should see a doctor."

"Uh, he isn't taking my calls right now. Look, I just want to know if anyone else has said anything. Any recalls? You know, like a reaction to the material or something. Ever since I tried it on, I think I've been dropping weight."

The clerk rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Can't seem to recall anything like that. We had some rubber masks six years ago that were giving people a rash... But nothing like that recently. Which costume did you buy again?"

"The cheerleader costume!" Tom yelped. As he did, a few strands of hair fell into his eyes and he pulled them back.

"I sell a lot of cheerleader costumes."

"The one where... Look, I'm wearing the sweater right now."

"I thought that looked familiar. It's a nice sweater, but it's a bit warm for that, isn't it?"

Tom took a protective step back. "I'm not taking off my sweater."

"Grown kind of attached to it, have you?"

"What? No. I just like it, that's all. It looks good on me."

Objectively, however, that was questionable. The large blue sweater had v-shaped stripes in light blue and dark blue, with a large block letter that read "W" across the chest, and was not particularly tasteful, nor visually appealing, nor particularly masculine. Especially for a stockbroker, in weekend casual or not.

"Well, it does suit you," the clerk said.

“Yes, it does,” Tom replied, he looked down at himself and seemed to lose his focus for a moment. “But... But I think it’s responsible for my weight loss. I’ve been sweating for days, like I’m melting.”

“That may just be because it’s seventy two and you’re wearing a sweater.”

“I’m *not* taking my sweater off!” Tom reiterated. “But you might have a point.” He scratched his lower leg. “My skin itches all over, too.”

“You know what would help that?” The clerk said.

Ten minutes later, Tom found himself walking away from the store with his new purchase of a pair of glossy dance tights. The clerk assured him that they would keep his legs from itching, and look great with his costume. It only took fifteen steps before Tom slowed down and had to wonder exactly what had just happened. He had just bought another item for this dumb costume, and he actually felt good about it.

Clearing the hair from his eyes, he saw the young boy who had purchased the Cinderella costume looking just as bewildered as Tom felt. He was just standing on the sidewalk, staring inside the bag.

“Why did we buy these?” Tom asked.

“I don’t know!” the kid replied, and ran off with his purchases tucked under his arm.



“I want to buy a different costume,” Tom said, as he walked right up to the clerk. It was only a few days before Halloween, and Tom had had a re-think of his costume strategy. “I don’t care what you have. Just give me a better costume than a freaking cheerleader!”

The clerk had to put aside the shelf stacking he was busying himself with to talk to his customer. “Well, hello again, Tim.”

“Tom!”

“I’m so glad to see you. In this business, you don’t get a lot of regular customers. Unless you count the furies.”

“The what?”

“Never mind. So what can I help you with today, Tim?”

“I told you. I need a different costume. I’m not going to let you give me the run-around, either! Just sell me something that I can buy and not feel mortified about wearing!”

“Second thoughts?”

“Second, third, fourth. I’m going to get fired. Seriously. I will lose my job if I show up at the office Halloween party dressed like a cheerleader girl!”

“How so?”

“The people who own my company have no sense of humor. No imagination. No mental capacity for *anything* that deviates from the norm!”

“You’re worried you won’t be able to carry it off?”

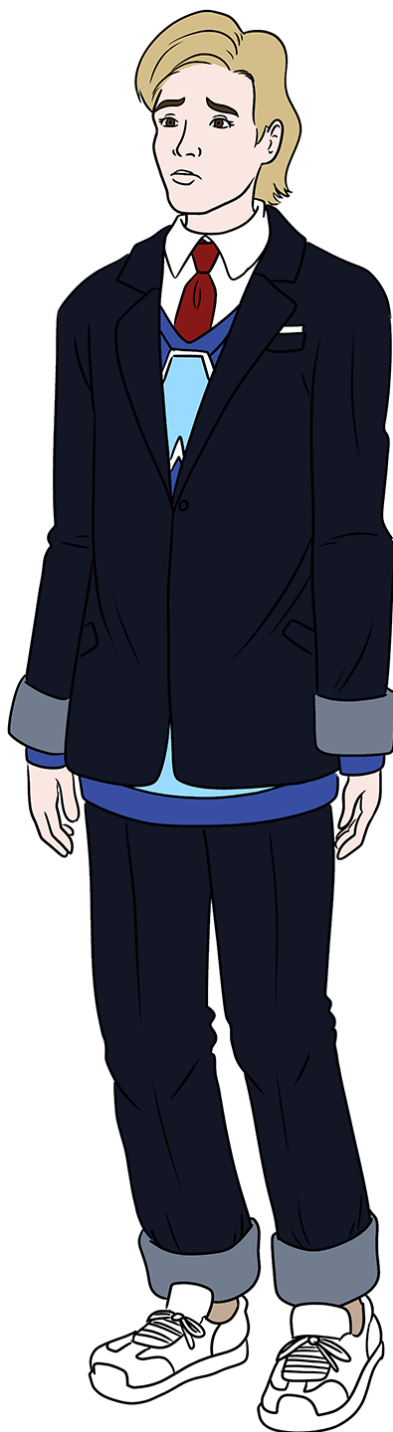
“No! I’m worried I’ll be tossed out on my ass if I show up to a company function dressed in a skirt and waving pom-poms! I work with people who care about glad-handing, promotions, exploiting weaknesses, and making money by the dump truck. They’re jackals, vultures and parasites! They’re ruthless when they spot a vulnerability, and I’m not going to just hand them one!”

“You need confidence, my dear boy! Confidence!” The clerk escorted Tom over to another stack of clothes he had nearby. “You just need to be poised and self-assured! I can see it all over your face.”

Anyone looking at Tom, however, would not be looking at his face. They would have been looking everywhere else. He was once again in his spotless all-white trainers, clashing badly with his suit. His navy blue pants were rolled up at the cuffs crudely, as Tom had been adjusting them constantly, to keep himself from stepping on the edges of the legs. For reasons he didn’t understand, he’d have to keep rolling them up, seemingly four or five times a day, or risk tripping on them.

Not to mention that if one were keen to look, they might notice the shiny dance tights on his ankles in the inch between his shoes and his pant cuffs.

Under his suit jacket was the sweater of his costume, hidden for the most part, but still badly clashing with his suit and completely out of place. The sleeves of his jacket nearly



covered his hands entirely, even cuffed, and the lapels were cartoonishly oversized for his shoulders and neck.

But for some reason, Tom continued to wear his business suit, as ill-fitting as it was, just because it was all he knew.

“Confidence? I *made* my reputation on confidence!” Tom declared, pounding his fist on the wall. “Ow!” He said, shaking his injured hand and then sucking on where it hurt.

“Ah yes, maybe as a stockbroker. I can see that, certainly. Very intimidating.” The clerk picked up a package. “But as a high school cheerleader? You have no confidence. It’s not enough to look on the outside like a cheerleader, it’s got to be deeper than that.”

“You mean, like really *believing* I am a cheerleader? In my mind?” Tom asked.

The clerk laughed. “I just meant under the uniform. Here.” He handed the package to Tom. “Bra and panties.”

“What? No!” Tom handed them right back. “What the hell, man?”

“You’re probably wearing boxers, aren’t you? Or those infernal boxer-brief things that are popular with the young people.”

“What I wear is none of...”

“Describe them to me. Tell me I’m wrong. It’s those boxer-briefs, isn’t it?”

“I don’t have to tell you...”

“White ones. Tidy Whites.”

“Grey!” Tom fired back. “Grey with a black band.”

“Give them to me.”

“Uh... Pardon?”

“Take them off and give them to me. To think you could ever feel like a confident cheerleader in boxer-briefs, and grey ones at that... Well, thank goodness you stopped by.” He held out his hand expectantly.

“I’m not taking off my underwear here in the middle of the shop!”

“No one’s here.”

“This is ridiculous! Just sell me another costume.”

“You’ll have to take off those shoes and the sweater to wear any other costume, you realize that, don’t you?”

“I’m not taking them off!” Tom protested. His protest made no rational sense, but in Tom’s mind, all he cared about was keeping his comfortable shoes and fuzzy costume sweater on at all costs. That overrode everything.

“Then you need to be confident wearing them. Can you afford to risk a lack of confidence in your job, Tim?” The clerk struck his hand out again. “Your underwear, please.”

IT'S JUST BUSINESS



“Look out!” Simone shrieked, pointing down the road. In the fading twilight of the early evening, a large car swerved.

It was a black SUV with tinted windows, and it swerved one way, then the other. It slowly began to tip over, then suddenly, it was skidding along the pavement on its side, sparks flying everywhere. The back window shattered and flew off.

Martin didn't have to take very dramatic action to miss it, just pulling over to the side of the road and stopping. The SUV was not too far away.

“Hold on, let me check if the jackass is okay,” Martin said to his girlfriend of five years as he unbuckled his seat belt and jumped out.

“Wait!” Simone called as he dashed off. It was already too late to catch him. He was always like this, rushing into trouble.

She had one foot out of the car herself, but remained there. Then she noticed something at her feet.

“He's okay,” Martin said, as he came back a few minutes later. “He told me to get out of there, though. Said he'd arrest me if I didn't. Didn't want to be helped, I guess.”

“Is it a government car?” Simone asked out loud.

“I can hear sirens coming,” Martin said, looking down the road.

“Yeah, maybe we should go?”

“But what if they need a witness or something?”

“Do you really want to hang around to fill out witness statements?” Simone asked. “The driver lost control, he's okay, the people are coming to help. Let's go.”

Martin wasn't sure. Since he was a man, he liked feeling helpful. Men liked being heroes. This was his element.

“Come on!” Simone shouted, her skin turning red.

He also didn't want to upset Simone.

Martin got back in the car, talking about what he had just seen, repeating himself many times.

“Just went over on its side.”

“Must have lost control.”

“Probably blew a tire.”

“It just went right over.”

Simone glanced in the rear view mirror as they drove away, seeing the flashing lights of what looked like a dozen cop cars coming to the scene of the accident. Simone punched the music button and filled the car with rock. It cleared their minds as they began to get back on track.

“Gonna be a great party!” Simone said.
“Right, honey?”

Martin nodded. “Uh, yeah... Sure. Sure.”



“Is that all you could find?” Simone asked her boyfriend as they dressed in the motel bedroom.

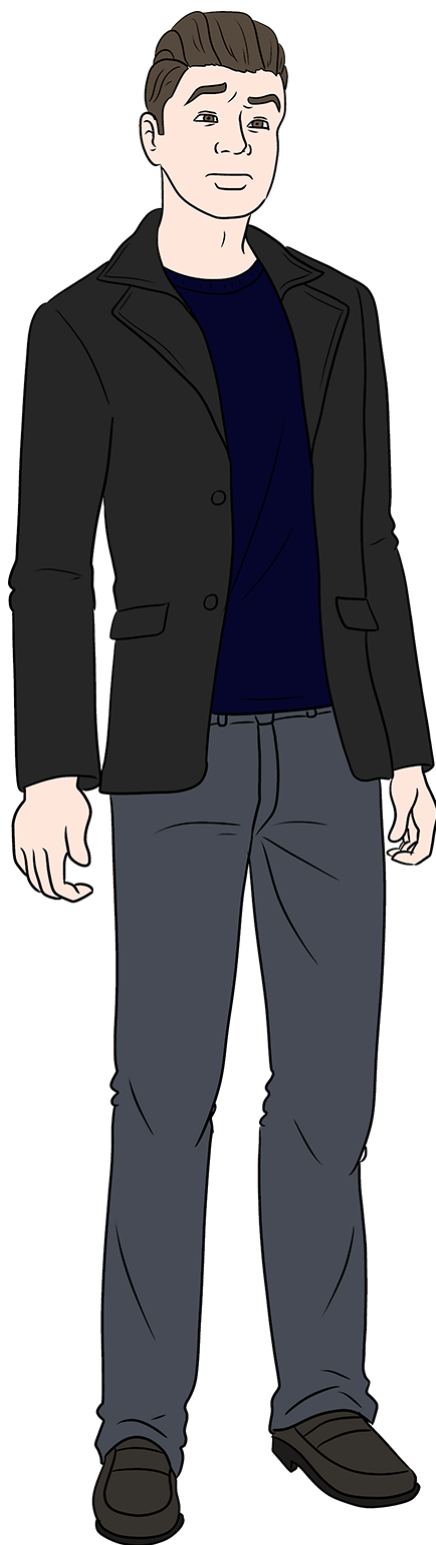
“I had 12 hours!” Martin grumbled back. “That’s when I found out you wanted us to go as the opposite sex. I had a perfectly good Dracula costume, too.”

“Look, it was a fun idea! Gender-bending is fun! It’s an awesome idea. But that’s still a pretty sad costume,” Simone said. “I put mine together without a lot of trouble. Just stuff from your closet.”

“Well, I went out and *bought* mine,” Martin said.

“You bought that, knowing you would wear it,” she asked.

“If I was going to dress like a lady, I was going to go all the way,” Martin crudely replied. He was a little angry he couldn't wear the sweet Dracula costume he had in his closet, and looked at the package on the chair forlornly. “Hollywood Star Sexy Secretary Costume,” it said on the front. The thing was, although Martin had indeed purchased a real costume, it was the cheapest one in the whole store. They had



fifty of them left, they were so unpopular. He could never pass up a bargain.

It was a pair of red heels, over-the-knee black stockings, a navy pencil skirt, white shirt with a wide-open neck, navy jacket, necklace of plastic pearls and a pair of lensless glasses. He had also bought a ridiculously curly, fluffy blond wig to go with it.

A good value for twenty bucks, but still, was it worth the embarrassment? Martin had asked himself this many times over the past several hours.

Still, it wasn't his style to let on that he was out of options. "I had to fight off five other people to get it," he boasted. "I'm going to be the hit of the party!"

"Sure you will," Simone replied, with salt.

Truthfully, Martin didn't want to wear it at all — but that clerk at the costume store had been so positive that it was the right choice for him at his price. Now he'd wished he'd listened to the voice in his head not to buy it, but he hadn't. That clerk must be some kind of hypnotist or something, Martin told himself.

"I'm ready for you!" Simone called out from the bathroom, a half hour later. She had volunteered her services to do the makeup for Martin, something she could not be talked out of.

He sat down on the edge of the tub as Simone went to work. He felt ridiculous, as he was dressed in the costume, and sitting there like nothing was out of order. His girlfriend was even dressed up as a man, in what she called a "sports guy" costume, but was little more than a football jersey and sweatpants. If he had known the lack of effort she was going to put into it, he'd have slumped it, too, and never would have bothered putting on a skirt and heels.

He felt so weird in women's clothes, like he wanted to crawl out of his skin and down a sewer pipe to never be seen again.

"Don't forget your purse," Simone told him, as he left with her to go to the party.

Irritated but compliantly, Martin turned around to pick up his black purse, which for the evening was going to be his. He held it up and hobbled out of the room, his red two-inch heeled pumps tripping him up slightly.

"Oh honey, you look fab-u-lous!" Simone said, doing her best drag queen voice.

"You're hilarious," Martin said.

When they showed up at the costume party, they were all dressed and ready. Although Simone was in a jersey and sweats, she still looked great. She had put a little makeup on her face to make it look like she had a five o'clock shadow, and slicked her hair back under a trucker cap. That was not enough to distract you from her being a buxom, curvy young woman with a killer smile.

Martin's secretary costume was surprisingly decent. His gorilla-like gait was the only thing that really made it obvious what his true gender was. Otherwise,

his square male body was neatly concealed by the pinstripe jacket, which had obviously been designed to accommodate the chubbier of ladies. It also showed off his legs, which were shockingly attractive for being those of a man.

He also had the advantage of being given an expert makeup job by Simone. His face looked clean, polished and natural. In spite of everything, Simone knew what she was doing and had made Martin look like he wore makeup every day. If you had seen Martin sitting at a cafe, gabbing with his girlfriends over coffee, you would only have thought you were looking at an unappealing woman, not a disguised man.

“Alright, my dearest,” Simone said to her boyfriend. “Are you ready to knock the men dead?” She gave him a slap on the butt.

“What do you think?” Martin objected.

“Hey, I think you need to show some of that flirty behavior that beautiful women like you love to tease guys with.”

“Tone it down, okay?” Martin asked. “This is embarrassing enough.”

His wife snickered. “Can’t handle being a woman? That’s okay. I can handle it for the both of us. Just smile and I’ll do all the talking.”

Martin held his tongue, as he really didn't want to make this any worse. This thing was being thrown by his biggest client, and he at least needed to be pleasant. Besides, as soon as they were inside, it was going to be a big party. Music, dancing, party games, a buffet and all the crazy costumes. It was going to be a great night.



It was a lousy night.



The party was pathetic. They had turned it into a company pep-talk, with long speeches from executives about their vision for the business. There were no party games. There was no dancing. There wasn't any food after the first hour. The bar was not complimentary.

Martin and Simone left early. "We do have the room for the night," Martin said.

"I just wanna go home," Simone said.

He murmured his agreement.

Simone tugged at her costume. "Should we change?"

"Why bother," Martin said. "We can do it when we get back home."

It was about fifteen minutes later that they happened upon the same stretch of freeway where they had seen the accident with the black SUV. Even in the darkness, they could see that the scene had been completely cleared.

"There's not even a trace of the crash," Simone observed.

"They're good at that these days," Martin said. "I've seen oil tankers on fire during my morning commute and the whole place is scrubbed clean by the evening."

"They got a checkpoint, though," Simone said. She could see a short line of cars being illuminated by some temporary flood lights.

Martin pulled into line as someone with a flashlight motioned him to go in that direction.

Of all the things to happen to him while dressed up like a girl, he would have to get pulled over and talk to someone. Martin groaned as he lowered the window. It was Halloween, so hopefully he wouldn't have to explain it.

"Hi folks, how are you doin' tonight?" Asked a woman in a windbreaker as she ducked down to speak into the driver's side window.

"Uh, fine," Martin replied. He was going to add "officer" to his statement, but realized there was no logo to show. She didn't flash a badge. She just had on an official-looking black jacket, with nothing else to identify her. He was also expecting some kind of check to see if he was drunk, which would have made sense on a holiday night like this. She made no such attempt. "Is there a problem?"

The woman shined a super-bright flashlight into the car, blinding whoever she shined it on. "Just checking for fugitives," she said. "We had a theft out here earlier. Some valuable equipment."

"Looking for a man and a woman," the official said. "They were involved in an accident with an official vehicle. What was your name again, ma'am?"

Martin was expecting his girlfriend to answer, but then realized she was talking to him. He forgot what he looked like.

“Stephanie,” he replied. “My name is Stephanie, the Sexy Secretary.” He was trying to lighten the mood with a little humor. It didn't seem to land.

“I see,” the woman responded, writing something down on a clipboard.

“And I'm Sports Guy,” Simone added, figuring to join in on the fun.

“Got it,” the woman said, writing more down.

It was about then that Martin realized he was being taken seriously. He knew that he wasn't really wearing a “costume” per se, but just a normal outfit that was meant to be interpreted as a costume, but he had never assumed anyone wouldn't get the joke. This woman was taking it all as the truth.

Simone stirred, rose a finger and opened her mouth, but a tight grasp from Martin's hand on her leg was enough to stop her.

Martin further realized that the “fugitives” this person was looking for were them. He didn't know why, he didn't know the details. He only knew that he and his girlfriend were potentially in trouble, and like most people, he was scared.

“All right folks,” the woman said, but hesitating for quite a while before taking her light away from the occupants. “Well, I guess you should be on your way. If you live in the area, keep your door locked tonight. Those fugitives are going to be brought to justice, one way or another. Dead or alive.” She was gritting her teeth. “Have a nice night!”

Martin wasted no time in putting up his window and stepping on the gas.

“Why...?” Simone asked as soon as the car pulled away.

“Because they were looking for *us*,” Martin interrupted. “We were the reason they were stopping cars.” He had picked up on the same things Martin had.

“But...?” Simone began again.

Again, Martin cut her off. “They were looking for a man and a woman who fit our description. It was all I could think of. I didn't want them searching the car. I think I still have some weed in here. Plus, we're probably drunk.”

“Good thinking, I guess,” Simone said. “But there *is* an SUV following us,” she added, using the passenger mirror.

Martin gripped the wheel tighter. “Shit, shit, shit.”

Simone felt the item in her pocket once again. She suddenly realized she had what they were looking for. She had picked it up when the car turned over. “Stay calm,” she said. “Just keep on driving like nothing's happening. No sudden moves. Follow all the lights. Don't give them an excuse to stop us.”

Martin looked side-eyed at his girlfriend, wondering why she was so suddenly concerned. Did she know something?

Back at the check point, the woman in the windbreaker spoke into her walkie-talkie. “You got them, car 15?” She asked.

“10-4,” came the answer.

“Don’t let them out of your sight,” she replied. “They were the best leads we’ve had all night.”

“Warm night for Halloween,” a man said, approaching the female agent. There were no cars coming through the checkpoint for the moment.

“It’s Halloween?” The woman replied.

“You didn’t wonder why all these people are wearing costumes? You need to get out more,” he said.

“And you need to focus, Dale.”

“Control sure is worried about this,” said the young agent. “This is a lot of manpower.”

“We lost something valuable here tonight, Dale. We can’t let it get into foreign hands. That diamond was payment for the Saudi government. The Perlatz Diamond.”

“Perlatz Diamond?”

“Worth a cool half billion,” the woman said. “We have to get it back, no matter what.”

In the small, increasingly claustrophobic car driven by Martin Hayden, the two occupants had their eyes trained on the rear-view mirror.

“It’s trailing us,” Simone said. “Try to shake them.”

Martin made a raspberry. “How the fuck would you do that? This isn’t a cop show.”

“Oh,” Simone answered. “But that SUV is definitely trailing us. It disappears for a little bit, but then reappears.”

Martin was getting punchy. “What does it want? Why us?”

Simone thought about telling them what she knew, but she was too scared. She clutched the diamond even tighter in her pocket.

“Well, we can’t go home like this,” Simone said, pulling at the ridiculous outfit she wore.

“Huh?” Martin said.

“They’re trailing us, and they expect us to be who we just claimed we were. If we split up, they can only follow one of us. It’s just one car.”

“That’s probably a good idea,” Martin replied, getting his phone. “I’ll get a hotel room. Register under that name... What was it again?”

“Stephanie.”

“Right. Stephanie. Stephanie... Lipscomb. That’s a good name. Stephanie Lipscomb, single secretary. Just spending the night. No reason to be suspicious.”

KEVIN'S NEW CALLING



“A clown?” A man with a red beard and a shock of hair coming up from his scalp asked. He adjusted the vest he was wearing.

“Very popular these days. I always knew clowns would come back into fashion.” The clerk dusted off the plastic mask of a classic harlequin-style jester they were looking at.

The bearded man was skeptical. “I’m not sure you... I, uh... It’s *murdering* clowns that are popular.”

“Oh.” The clerk thought about it for a moment, took a marker from his pocket and drew angry eyebrows on the mask. “There you go.”

“Ah. Well, anyway, what else is there?”

“What about a sexy nurse?”

The bearded customer looked around. “Do you have any non-female costumes here?”

“Not a lot of call for it around these parts.”

“Not a lot of call for it? Half the planet is made of men.”

“Well, it’s early. We can still turn the tide.”

“Huh?”

The bell at the front door jingled. “Just look around, and let me know. I’ll be back.” The clerk dismissed himself and went to go attend to his new customer. “May I help you, sir?”

“I can’t believe I have to do this,” said the young man who was standing before him, his head hunched in between his shoulders and his hands in his pockets.

“Do what, sir?”

“I had a perfectly good costume for Halloween this year. But no!” The man groused. “I showed it to him and he said I had it wasn’t good enough.”

“I’m not following, sir,” the clerk said.

The man sighed and took one of his hands out of his pocket and brought it up to his mouth to direct his whisper. “I don’t want anyone to hear this. It’s really embarrassing.”

“We are very discreet, sir,” the clerk said. “After all, we *are* a discount chain costume store.”

“Oh, yes, of course.” He looked around and motioned towards a corner. The clerk followed him as he continued to speak. “My co-worker Dave won a bet. I had the Jets by seven and a half, and I was winning, when they fucking went for two! *Why* would you go for two?”

“I see,” the clerk said, clearly not seeing.

“Anyway, he won, I lost, and he got to choose the costumes for Halloween. He went with pilot and flight attendant.”

“We do have some pilot costumes...”

“I told you, I lost. I have to be the flight attendant.”

“Well, we have a costume selection for...”

“I *have* a costume. A perfectly good one. Navy blazer, matching slacks, pocket square, wing pin, tie... A perfectly good flight attendant costume.”

“I don't follow then.”

“He says it's not good enough. He wants me to dress up as a *female* flight attendant.”

“Ah-ha! That's a specialty!” The clerk said. “Now, we have a wide variety of...”

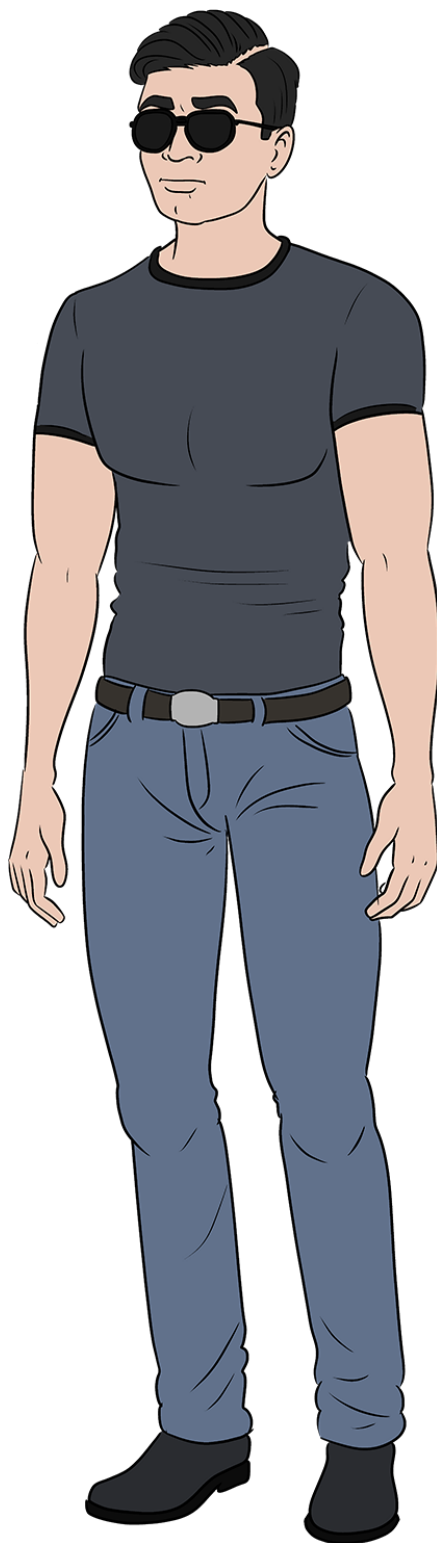
“Ssssh!” The man scolded.

“My apologies. I get carried away sometimes.”

“The thing is, I know I lost the bet and all, but I just want to do the bare minimum. The very least it would take to be seen as a female costume. That jackass is not getting me to dress up in women's clothing, I don't care how many bets he wins!”

The clerk placed his finger to his lips to signal the need to lower his volume.

“I know, I know. It just gets me so pissed off! I just don't want to give him



the satisfaction!" He was breathing hard, and steadied himself. "Anyway, I was thinking, you know, maybe a unisex wig or some looser-legged slacks. Nothing that would really give the game away, but enough. So I went out, bought what I needed, and it's still not enough."

"It's quite a story," the clerk said. "Spellbinding."

The man wasn't sure if the clerk was being sarcastic or not. He didn't much care. He just wanted to vent a little. "No pants, Kevin," he tells me. "Some flight attendants may wear slacks, but not you. How else would they know it's a costume?" he says."

"Indeed," the clerk said, as he felt the opening to say something.

"What does he think this is? The fifties? Women don't wear skirts anymore. Especially flight attendants. Those are ladies with a knot in their iron panties, let me tell you. They look like prison matrons these days."

"Interesting," the clerk said.

"Anyway, why I'm here, is I need a skirt to match my blazer."

"A clothing store might be a better..."

"Two hundred dollars!" Kevin said. "I checked. So I figure, a costume store is cheap. They'll have a costume skirt for way less, am I right? I only have to wear it for a week, after all."

"A week?" The clerk inquired. "You're wearing the costume for an entire week?"

"At the office where we work. Part of the bet." He clapped his hands together. "So let's take a look, okay?"

"I'll see what we have, sir."

As the clerk began to patrol the aisles of his store, stuffed with cheap witches hats, cloaks, rubber noses, synthetic wigs and a variety of garish apparel, Kevin trailed closely behind him. There was a substantial odor of benzene coming from the low-grade plastics that was making the young man feel a little woozy.

"Dude really wants to punish me," Kevin said. "He's supposed to be my friend, but what kind of friend does this to another guy? Seriously, he's trying to push my buttons." He paused for a moment, but Kevin was the sort of man who hated the sound of silence. "I had a girlfriend once who wanted me to wear her panties. That was the end of that relationship. Well, after another three weeks of sex, but the panties thing was when the passion went out of it."

"Here's something that might fit the bill..." The clerk was eager to end this conversation. "From the Navy WACS uniform."

"What's WACS?" Kevin asked.

"It's what they make candles out of," the clerk quipped. The statement went right over his customer's head, just like he expected it to. "The skirt is long

enough to protect your modesty, I think.”

Kevin held it up to his waist. The hem was mid-shin. “That’s still more skirt than I ever wanted to wear, though.”

“How about some shoes to go with it?”

“Yeah, he told me to get some shoes. Perv.”

“We have one-inch pumps, kitten heels, ballerina flats...”

“That last one. The flats. I may have to dress in a skirt, but hell if I’m gonna wear high heels.”

“Let’s ring it up, then?” The clerk said, hopefully.

Kevin grunted and handed over his credit card. “Let’s just get this over with.” He put his hands back in his pockets, hunched over and looked around to make sure no one was looking at him. “Goin’ for two. Unbelievable.”

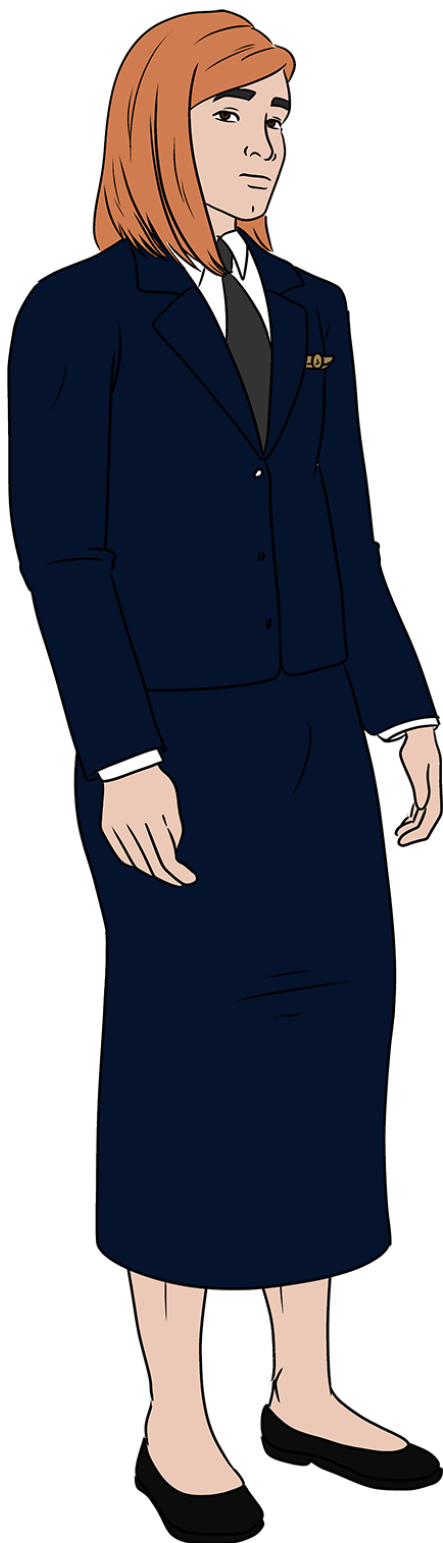


“Can’t believe I have to come back to this lousy store...” Kevin grumbled as he marched into the costume store the next day in his flats.

“Welcome!” the clerk said, clasping his hands together. “Oh, I remember you from yesterday! Nothing wrong, I hope.”

“Nothing wrong?” Kevin blasted. “Just a lousy, asswipe of a friend, that’s all. Look at me!”

“And?”



"This isn't feminine enough for him! What more does he want?" Kevin was fully dressed in his costume, with the navy blue blazer, matching long skirt, black ballerina flats with a white dress shirt and black tie. He was also wearing a wig that could have been interpreted as either very short for a woman or bushy for a man. He even wore his little gold wings pin. "I've been walkin' around all day at work like this, and now he says it ain't feminine enough!"

"Oh, you two work together?"

"I'm his boss," Kevin said. "Which makes this even more humiliating. Fuckin' Dave. Or, as I'm supposed to call him this week, *Captain Dave*."

"You made a very detailed bet with this man, didn't you?"

"I thought I would win!" Kevin said. "I made up a bunch of rules because I thought I was going to mess with him. Now, I gotta do what he says."

"Ah. Well, was he good enough to let you now what needed to be altered?"

"Make-up," Kevin replied, practically forcing the words out of his mouth. "He says I gotta wear makeup. What the hell? Not all women wear makeup."

"Well, I'd beg to differ," the clerk said. "Most women who look like they're not wearing makeup use makeup to *look* like they're not wearing makeup."

"You lost me," Kevin said.

"You were always lost," the clerk said in his mind. "We have a wide variety of stage makeup to choose from, and our selection is the best in town, I'm proud to say."

"Great. I can buy makeup. But what do I do with it? I'm a dude! What do I know about makeup?"

"We do offer our services to apply the makeup you buy, and teach you how to use it in the future." He pointed to a sign near the desk that read "Free makeup application & tutorial with purchase."

"Didn't that sign say 'no refunds' a minute ago?" Kevin asked, scratching his stubbled chin.

"No refunds? Of course we offer refunds. Don't be ridiculous." The clerk looked offended at the insinuation. "Now, let's pick something out and get started, shall we?"

Kevin groaned, from deep in his chest. "Fine," he said. The clerk showed him the way to his work station with a grin on his face that made Kevin feel like he'd just made the worst mistake of his life.

After about ten minutes of brushes, lotions, more brushes, creams, tiny brushes, sponges, and yet more brushes, Kevin examined his face in the small round makeup mirror and furrowed his brow.

"Usually I do Draculas and Frankensteins," the clerk said. "This is a welcome break in my routine."

THE WICKED STEP-MOTHER



“Finally!” said a woman who had just stepped into Costume Central #219, as if finding a discount costume store around Halloween was some kind of achievement.

She was dressed in a large-stitch beige shawl over a white sweater, black leggings and four-inch beige wedge heels. Her long hair, a mix of blonde and streaks of white was swept back off her face to see the large gold earrings she was wearing, but also exposed her aging skin.

“This is the place, Cody. Let’s see if we’re in luck!” She said, beckoning someone into the store.

Trailing behind was a 17-year old boy, dressed in a high school letterman’s jacket, with the tails of a flannel shirt coming out at the bottom. His black hair was covering as much of his head as possible without being long. His basketball shoes were untied and his skinny jeans were rumpled around his ankles.

He said nothing, only letting his disaffected, annoyed expression do the talking for him.

“Let’s see if we can find someone to help us,” the woman said out loud, with animated gestures, knowing that everyone could hear her — she clearly wanted to be the center of attention.

Knowing this was his cue, the clerk clasped his hands together and approached.

“Yes, Ma’am, how may I be of service?” he said.

“Oh, do you work here? Well, as you know Halloween is coming up,” the woman said.

“That is true,” the clerk replied, standing in front of a giant cardboard cut-out of a jack-o-lantern.

“It sneaks up on you every year!” The woman proclaimed. “Anyway, I was talking with the girls, and they all had the most extravagant plans for heir costumes this year. I was so embarrassed! I had nothing planned. I swear, if they hadn’t reminded me, I would have forgotten all about it! Can you imagine?”

“It would have been truly unfortunate,” the clerk said.

“I know! So this year, I’ve decided to go all out! We’re going to do the most incredible costume.” She turned to the kid. “Isn’t that right, Cody?”

Cody didn’t say anything, and averted his eyes.

“He’s still a little testy about it,” the woman explained. “So, what we want to do is switch places. I dress up as Cody, and Cody dresses up like me. Isn’t that just the most amazing idea?”

The clerk wasn’t sure he had heard that right. Usually, it was a lot of hassle to get people to do this kind of thing. He had spent years of his life devising complicated methods to coerce this kind of swap. To just have people waltz into his shop and ask for it was kind of unnerving. “It certainly does sound unique,” the clerk said “What did you have in mind?”

“Well, just swapping clothes isn’t really an option. We’re completely different sizes. I was thinking about just buying new clothes for our costumes, but there’s also the matter of hair, makeup, padding...”

“And you have unusual foresight, Miss...”

“Mrs. Victoria Blakeridge,” she said, with more than a hint of pride. “Maybe you’ve heard of my husband, Gregory Blakeridge.”

“The movie director?”

“Oh, he’s more of a producer these days, but yes. That’s my husband. Being in the movie business, our friends can spot a bad costuming job very easily, and I wanted the best — on a budget. You come highly rated.”

“Yes, they have been kind to us on Yorp.”

“Yelp!” Cody corrected.

“That, too.”

“I don’t think I’ll have too much trouble disguising myself as my step-son, but I do think Cody will need quite a bit of work to look like me.”



“I don't want to do this, Victoria!” Cody whined.

The woman, Victoria, dismissed him without even looking at him. “Yes you do, Cody! We agreed!”

“Pfft,” Cody said.

“Please forgive my step-son. Now, I have an appointment with my aromatherapist. I'll be back in two hours, and I do hope you can fashion a fabulous costume and disguise for him by the time I get back. I leave him in your hands!”

She was out the door before the clerk could get a word in. He would have asked many questions, along the lines of money, what exactly she expected, and if they even offered the services she was requesting.

He was amused, though, and quite intrigued. He decided that whatever services she thought they offered at Costume Central, he would offer them.

“Well, Cody, should we get started?”

“I really don't want to do this, dude,” Cody said, pulling his hair out of his eyes for a moment. “My step-mom just came up with this stupid plan, and said she'd give me five hundred bucks if I played along.”

“I do understand. This would not be the first time I've worked with someone who's heart wasn't in it.”

“Yeah, I ain't gonna help you out, dude. I think Victoria's out of her fuckin' mind.”

“Understood.” The clerk motioned to the back room. “Why don't you disrobe in the back, and I'll bring some things in.”

“Fine, yeah, whatever. Fine.” Cody slouched his way through the rubber curtains of the back storeroom door.

In almost no time at all, the clerk hoisted some items into the back, where he found Cody in his briefs. He was a rugged young man, who was in the prime of his youth. He had defined pectorals and abs, and his thighs were lean and powerful. His face, too, was youthful, which was going to be part of the challenge ahead.

“I appreciate your cooperation, Cody,” the clerk said as he laid out things on a nearby table. “My first question is how many times might you be wearing this costume?”

“Victoria says for the next week, so I dunno, seven times? Eight?”

“All week?”

“Her stupid idea is that I live her life for the whole week, and by halloween, I'll be bale to fool my step-dad.”

The clerk handed him a pair of black leggings. “Step-dad? I thought Victoria was your step-mother.”

“My real mom and dad got divorced. Dad’s been AWOL since. Mom married Gregory, which made him my step-dad. Then my mom died two years ago.”

“I’m sorry.”

“I’m over it. Anyway, after she died I was living with my step-dad, and he married Victoria. So now I have a step-dad and a step-mom. It’s fucked up.”

“Oh, I see.” The clerk noted Cody was having trouble figuring out what to do with the leggings. “They’re for your legs,” he said. “It sounds like a tough way to grow up.”

“Actually, I got, like five friends at school who had the same thing happen to them. It’s nothing special.”

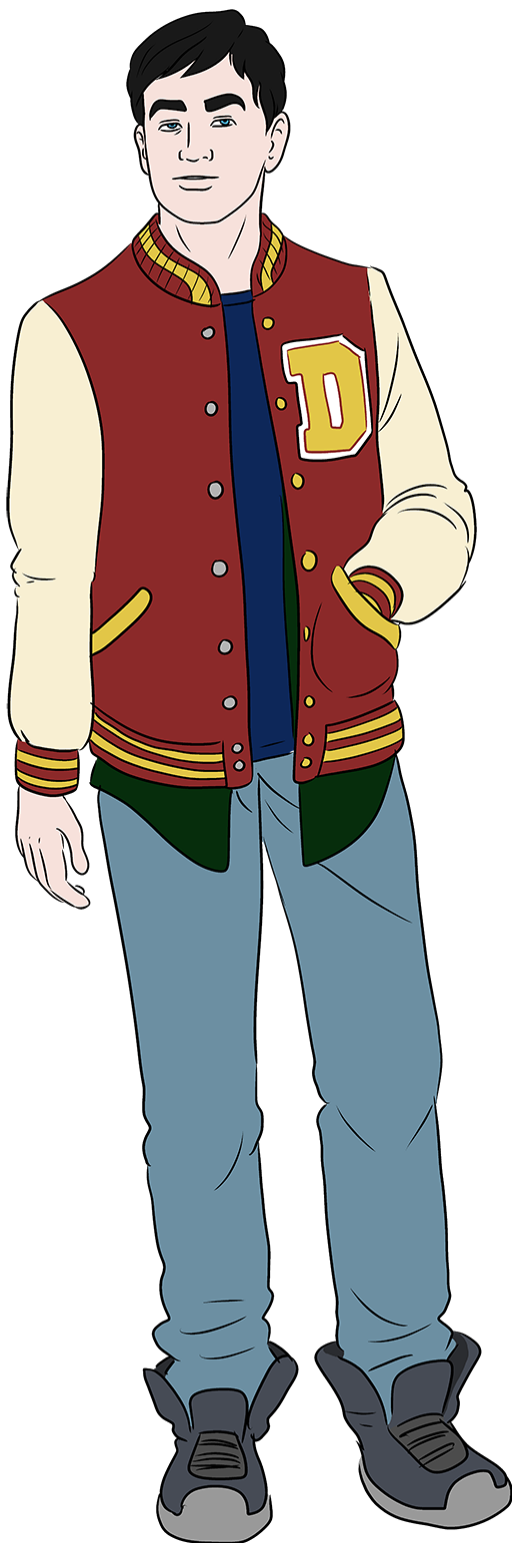
“Modern times,” the clerk said to himself. “Okay, now, here comes a big one. This is a padded bra.” he held it out for a moment so the boy could get a look at it. It wasn’t a padded bra in the conventional sense. It was a bra with completely stuffed cups.

“That’s huge.”

“Well, it is accurate to your mother.”

“Yeah, she gots them big tiddys,” Cody said. “She’s getting really fat.”

The clerk cringed. It was clear that Cody didn’t have much respect his step-mother. “You’ll want to put this on backwards around your chest, close it up, and then turn it around the right way.”



“Hey, it’s not the first time Code’s worked a bra, dude,” the young man said with a wink and a lewd smile. he snatched the bra from the clerk.

It made things easier for the clerk. He had little tolerance for this kind of disrespectful behavior. A little time in his mother’s place was probably going to teach him a lesson.

He picked up the white sweater top, and shook a little of the excess magic off of it. This would be different than his usual routine. This would require a different type of sorcery, but he enjoyed changing things up a little.

“Everything in place?” The clerk asked Cody. “Now for the sweater top.”

The costume shop employee watched with interest as the young man pulled it over himself and adjusted it. It was done. Now, it would just be a matter of moving him along and managing him through the process.

“And the shawl,” the clerk said.

Cody took the beige large-stitch garment. “It’s kinda whack that you have the same exact stuff Victoria was wearing today.”

“We have the widest costume selection in the city,” the clerk boasted. “Shoes are next,” he said, holding an identical pair of beige wedge-heeled booties to what Victoria had on.

A pair of large golden earrings were clipped to Cody’s ears and a quick touch of makeup. He wasn’t too happy about that, but he knew he had little choice.

“And finally, the wig,” the clerk said, holding a styrofoam head with a frazzled synthetic blonde wig.

“Is this gonna hurt?” Cody asked.

“You won’t mind one bit,” the clerk said, shaking off stray magic he had just sprinkled it with. “Ready?”

When Victoria arrived she was visibly excited to see the results of her stepson’s makeover, and skittered around the floor of the store looking for him, like a kid hunting eggs on Easter.

When she finally did spot her son, she shrieked out loud as she ran in place. “Look at you!” She shouted-screamed.

Cody wanted to die, even more so than normal, as Victoria fawned over him, touching and feeling every part of his costume.

“It’s perfect!” She said. “Don’t you think it’s perfect, honey?”

Cody’s eyes were dead to the world, as he valiantly tried to shut off the outside world to retain his composure. He didn’t dare speak, as he would have gotten slapped for what he wanted to say.

“This is so much better than I expected,” Victoria said to the clerk. “Now what about the body?”

“Ma’am?” the clerk asked.

“He’s too man-shaped. And his hair. It’s not terribly convincing.”

“Well, there’s only so much we can do in a couple of hours and...”

“Then we’ll be back tomorrow so you can finish the job!” Victoria said with a smile. “Cody? Let’s...” She said, then corrected herself. “I mean, Victoria. Let’s go.”

Cody clomped his way to the door, like he was walking on stilts. “I just wanna get home,” he grouched.

“We have a couple more errands to do,” his step-mother said. “And Victoria, you’re driving.” She put her big purse over her step-son’s shoulder.



“Oh my God,” Cheyenne said, covering her mouth in shock and amusement. “What the hell, Cody?”

“It’s *Victoria’s* idea,” he explained as he sighed.

“For you to dress up in her clothes?”

“I told you she had this weird idea for Halloween. This is it. Come on in, I guess.”

“Sure thing, Mrs. Blakeridge,” Cheyenne said with a giggle. “Are we alone?”

“Victoria’s upstairs. In my room. She’s picking out stuff for her costume.”

Cheyenne turned to look at her boyfriend, wondering where she she was going to take this. Blackmail? Humiliation? Role-play? It was all swimming in her head.



She was a very pretty girl, Cheyenne Chevet, who was 17, blond and had doll-like proportions. The girl was a part-time model — part-time only because she hated the work. Cheyenne was constantly being told how big she could be if she wanted to be, her picture everywhere, if she just made modeling her career. Almost against her will, she had already managed to appear on the cover of *Seventeen* twice and won every imaginable beauty pageant a teen can enter. Her parents wanted her to embrace “the gifts God gave her” but she just wanted to be a normal teenage girl.

That was difficult, because she had blossomed early and profoundly, with C/D size boobs on a petite frame. Cheyenne was easily most desirable girl in school — in the history of the school — and everyone with a pulse was obsessed with her, regardless of gender.

In short, Cheyenne Chevet was a rare beauty, almost one of legend, and Cody had her all to himself.

“So are you two switching roles or something?” Cheyenne cleverly observed.

“Yeah, that’s the idea, I guess. Stupid, if you ask me, but...”

“She is paying you, right?”

“Five hundred,” Cody said.

“Step-parents are such suckers for bribes,” Cheyenne said. She then held up one of Cody’s hands, which had one-and-a-quarter inch long square-tipped fingernails in a coral color polish. “So what about these?”

“Fuckin’ things are fuckin’ impossible,” Cody griped. “Can’t pick stuff up, can’t use my phone. I can’t even scratch my face without poking my eye.”

“They’re monsters. They look longer than hers. Are they?”

“I dunno. She got hers removed. We went to the costume shop and got the outfit and the wig, then she wanted to ‘show me off’ so we went to her nail place. Made me get these. She also...”

“No wonder you didn’t show at school today.”

“At least she didn’t make me go looking like this. Victoria told them I have the flu and will be out all week.”

“So, Mrs. Blakeridge,” Cheyenne said, cuddling up to Cody, “I was thinking that before my boyfriend shows up, we could make out.”

“I’m not buying into this crap, babe. Don’t give Victoria the satisfaction, okay?”

“You’re no fun.” Cheyenne pouted.

“You know that’s not true,” Cody said with a wicked smile.

“Still got dat ass,” Cheyenne said smashing herself into Cody from the front and reaching around to grab her boyfriend’s muscular butt with both hands.

“I know you like ‘em,” Cody said.

Cheyenne ran her hands up her boyfriend’s hard body. “I can still feel that hot bod of yours under all this shit,” she said. “It totally gives you away. That’s how I know... Wait. Are you wearing a bra?”

“Yeah, it’s part of the costume.” Cody tugged at his sweater. “You think they’re too small?”

“Are you seriously asking me if your boobs are too small?”

“Yeah, I think they should be bigger. And they sag too much.”

“Cody!”

“What can I say,” he grabbed Cheyenne’s breasts and gave them a shake. “I’m a tit man.”

Cheyenne giggled and pushed his hands away. Just as she did, they heard a door close and someone coming down the stairs.

Cody sighed. “Sounds like my step-mom is done. This is gonna be disturbing.”

“How fucked can it be?” Cheyenne said.

“Just you wait.”

“Hey, Cheyenne,” said Victoria in a poor imitation of her step-son’s deep voice. “Heard you come in. Sorry to keep you waiting, babe.”

“Your hair!” Cheyenne said with a gasp. “You didn’t...”

“She did,” Cody interjected.

“Yeah, just got it cut,” Victoria said, running her hand through what was now very short, black hair. It was styled identically to Cody’s.

“I don’t believe it!” Cheyenne said, a hand covering her gaping mouth. “You really did that?”

“It was just a trim,” Victoria said. “No big.”



Cheyenne was in shock. “That must have been twelve inches!”

“Whatever,” Victoria said with her best imitation of teenage indifference. She was dressed in one of Cody’s typical outfits, his favorite letterman’s jacket, jeans, basketball shoes and a tee. Given Victoria’s figure, however, she was not terribly convincing as her son, especially with her aging face and generous bosom.

However, it was her new closely-cropped hairstyle that was still getting most of the attention.

Cheyenne was focused on Victoria’s head and was moving around to see it from different angles. “That must have been so stressful to cut your hair off! I’d have started to cry!”

“Hey, guys like me get a hair cut every month. No stress,” Victoria said. She then looked at her step-son. “Right, Mom?”

“Greg is gonna freak out,” Cody said.

“Who knows when he’s going to be back from his latest movie.” Victoria shrugged. “And why would he freak out? His son gets haircuts all the time.”

“Keep pretending, Victoria, maybe it’ll even be funny.” Cody returned.

“Yeah, okay, *Victoria*,” Victoria said to him. She looked at Cheyenne. “Hey, babe, you wanna go catch a movie or something?”

“Uh, maybe later...” Cheyenne stood a bit further away from Victoria, wary of what she might do. “I was just dropping by to see why Cody wasn’t in school today.”

“Yeah, okay,” Victoria said. “I had the flu, right *Victoria*?”

Cody turned to his girlfriend, ignoring his step-mom’s antics. “Text me, okay?”

“Sure, babe.” She went up on her toes and smothered his mouth for a brief kiss. “Good luck.”

She then turned an exited though the same door she came through, and Cody’s heart broke as he watched her sweet, sweet ass walk away untapped.

“Doesn’t your boyfriend get a kiss?” Victoria asked, mockingly.

“Jesus, Victoria. She gets it, okay? Stop being a mental case.”

“Hey, she *is* my girl,” Victoria said.

“I’m not doing this! Five hundred isn’t worth this!” Cody barked.

“Okay, okay!” Victoria said, putting her hands up. “It’s just having a little fun!” She hustled away with a smile on her face.

