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99 pages **31** illustrations

LITTLE TOKYO

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack



TRANSGENDER STORIES OF THE
SUPERNATURAL



J O E S I X P A C K

***LITTLE
TOKYO***

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



2026 Edition

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LITTLE TOKYO

Once again, for the what felt like the infinitive time, the unstoppable force was meeting the immovable object. This paradox played out at least three times a week in these halls. Unlike the paradox, it would subside, briefly, before raging back to life, twice as powerful as before.

If he was going to have to choose which was which, Nate would have to say that Professor Mandrake Ravenclaw, the head of the Abnormal Psychology Department, was the unstoppable force. A man who had the brazen confidence of a cocky teenager but the body of an 80-year old — which he was. The immovable object was the rotund, bearded, forty-year old George Blutermann, the head of the Linguistic Anthropology Department. He had to be the immovable object only because he was as large as a boulder, and roughly the same shape.

Just around the corner, Nate Corman was cringing. He had been working here at Plains County Community College for just over a year, and couldn't believe no one had found a way to keep this argument from happening on such a regular basis. It was silly to have this same argument over the allocation of classrooms.

Here, in “Building M” on campus, the administration had packed away some of the more unpopular departments in the oldest of the 14 buildings available. Building M was small, cramped and congested. It was impossible to not run into every single person who worked there during an eight-hour day. Aside from the Abnormal Psychology and Linguistic Anthropology departments — and by “department,” that usually meant it was the one teacher who taught the subject — it was also home to the Foodservice Technology Department, the Apparel and Garment Crafting Department, the prestigious Welding Department and the nearly unattended Advanced Applied Mathematics Department.

It wasn't all bad. Despite the age of the building, it was a fair distance from other buildings and didn't get a lot of cross-traffic. That meant they weren't swamped with students, and since the administration office was clear on the other side of the spacious campus, they were too lazy to get involved with Building M. So without any meddling interference from superiors, the atmosphere was pretty laid-back and carefree.

Except when it was unstoppable vs immovable time.

“My twelve students simply cannot continue to use that glorified broom closet! There's practically no room to think!” Professor Ravenclaw was standing outside his office, dressed in one of his ancient tweed jackets with the clichéd leather patches on the elbows. “I have precedence on my side! Room 4 has



been used for my classes since I arrived here!” There were only seven small classrooms in Building M, but one larger amphitheater-style room, capable of holding up to 75 students. Nate taught his Intro to Advanced Applied Mathematics there, every Tuesday and Thursday at ten.

“But I had signed up for it first, sir!” Countered Professor Blutermann. “First come, ergo, first served!” Blutermann was only in his early forties, but had none of the charm of a man many years his senior. He was condescending, blunt and dismissive of everyone he met. Unfortunately, he managed to somehow make one of his classes a liberal arts degree requirement, which meant that he had to stay on.

“You deliberately obscured the sign-up sheet in the bulletin board!” Professor Ravenclaw wheezed in his dusty, raspy voice. “I was deceived!” Ravenclaw had been a tenured professor at Princeton for decades, but was pushed out for his increasingly eccentric behavior. He had been in and out of several institutions of higher learning and had finally had to settle for work at this small, obscure community college to pay the bills. According to him, however, he had only desired to move out to the plains because the air was better for his weak lungs.

They argued about the sign-in for classrooms on such a regular a basis, it bordered on pathological. Why they hadn’t been able to work something out was impossible to understand. Coin flips, rock paper scissors, guess a number between one and ten. Anything to resolve this pedantic issue. Truth was, neither needed to use a classroom that big. The only real advantage was that it had a private bathroom for the instructor.

But the usual pointless back and forth bickering took a different turn today. As Nate listened on, a new weapon was being unleashed in the great amphitheater war of PCCC.

“I have spoken to the scheduling office, and they have decided to assign the classroom on who has the largest class,” Ravenclaw said, with pride. “I have twenty-three students in my class and you have twenty. Starting next week, they have assured me that they will assign it to me for the rest of the semester, and henceforth, they will assign it to the largest number of students automatically. Enjoy your amphitheater while you can.”

Blutermann was gobsmacked. “That’s underhanded and duplicitous! I will not stand for such chicanery!”

“It is done, there is no point to further argue. I bid you good day.” Ravenclaw sheathed his verbal sword and returned to his office.

The rotund professor was not finished. “This will not...”

“I said *good day* sir!” Ravenclaw interrupted, and closed the door behind him.

“I will not let this go without retribution!” Blutermann howled at the closed door. “I demand my right of satisfaction!” He stood there for a moment to

catch his breath, and then sharply turned and headed back to his own office in a huff.

Nate looked around, made sure the coast was clear, then dashed across the hallway to his own office. He closed the door quietly behind him.

“The Bluto vs. Bird grudge match over?” Asked Rachel, Nate’s teacher assistant. She had a stack of quizzes she was grading.

“Bluto vs. Bird?” Nate asked, puzzled. “Oh, you mean Blutermann vs Ravenclaw. Yes, I think it’s actually been resolved.” Nate took a moment to reconsider. “Or made a million times worse. It’s hard for me to say.”

Rachel shrugged. “I don’t even hear it anymore. It’s like background noise.” She put down her red pencil and checked the time. “Aren’t you supposed to be out of here?”

“Just checking in before I have to go report to the court.” Nate had been assigned to jury duty, and in a high-profile case. The jury was to be sequestered, and he’d have no contact with the outside world for a few days. The judge estimated it might be as long as three weeks. He was already packed, with his flannel shirts, jeans, shaving kit and several Mathematics textbooks in his suitcases. “So any last questions?”

“I’m good. I have all your pre-taped lectures and tests ready to go. Your students will barely even know you’re not there.”

“They barely know most of the time anyway.”

“Your students love you.”

“They should, they get caught up on all their sleep in my class.” He took a look around his desk and found no reasons to delay his departure any further. “Thanks, Rachael. I’ll see you in a few days, hopefully. Remember, if you get in a pinch, Tim Holland in Building D can...”

Rachael interrupted. “I know, I know. Tim Holland, Mathematics Department. Just get going, you’re going to have the cops come drag you away if you keep dithering.”

“See you. Good luck.” Nate took his things and made his exit.

He was lucky to have Rachael, as most of the other so-called “departments” at Plains didn’t warrant or didn’t want a TA. But he had at least 47 students spread over three courses, so he definitely needed a little help grading and running the labs. Rachael was somewhere between “essential” and “a Godsend.” If she wasn’t so young, he’d have given her a shot, too. Although he was only 34, so it wasn’t like he was a bag of bones yet. There was only a 10 year difference in their ages, and that wasn’t that big a gap... Yes it was. He was just kidding himself if he thought that he could ever swing that.

Just to make sure he left on good terms, he decided to check in with everyone. “Hey, Hank, I’m headed out.” He stuck his head into the Welding Department office. “Last chance to beg me to stay.”

“Oh! Hey, amigo! Already?” Hank Watters was a skinny, thirty-eight year old man with a crew cut and an affinity for work shirts that had his name stitched on them. “Doing that double-murder trial? Get that psycho!”

“Hank, I can’t discuss the case.”

“Oh! Yeah! I guess not. So keep your nose outta trouble!”

“I’ll see you, Hank.” Nate then went next door into the Foodservice Technology Department — which was just a fancy way of saying it was a training program for McDonalds managers. They had the nicest digs, taking up a large space that was full of fast food kitchen equipment and a dining area to simulate a real restaurant. They’d even serve up lunch for the staff sometimes. “Hey, Nora!” Nate called out.

From behind the shake machine, Nora Masterson popped out. “What’s up?” She asked. She was a good-natured woman who had a good attitude, although she tended to stay upbeat even when the situation didn’t call for it. Nate could easily see her clapping and cheering on a funeral procession.

“I’m about to go into state-sponsored exile for a while,” Nate said. “I just wanted to let everyone know.”

“Is that happening today? Well, we’ll miss you!”

“Thanks, Nora!” From there, he headed across the way to the Apparel and Garment Crafting Department, which always had the churning noise of sewing machines running in the background. “Hey, Tom.”

Tom Yeager was not the person you’d expect to be teaching a glorified sewing class. First, he was a man. Besides that, he had a Fu Manchu mustache, bags under his eyes, a bowl cut and wore nothing but black t-shirts with metal bands on them. “Chief,” is how he addressed Nate.

“You smoking?” Nate asked.

“No,” Tom replied, a cigarette dangling from his lips.

“You know you have to do that outside, 25 feet from the building.”

“Uh-huh.”



Nate didn't really mind it too much, as Tom usually did go outside for his smoke breaks. But after class, like today, he just kept it in his office. Besides, Nate respected Tom's deadpan, no-nonsense attitude.

"Just wanted to let you know I'm headed out. See you in a few."

"Yeah," Tom said. "Got it."

That was Tom, a man of few words. Nate once more proceeded down the hall, deciding to pass on talking to George Blutermann, knowing how mad he was just a few minutes ago. Besides, he really was a bit of an oddball. He always had his head in some weird place. He'd probably not even notice Nate's absence.

He went past the Drama Department storage room and then headed over to Ravenclaw's office. He gave a quick tapping knock and then opened the door a few inches. "Hi Professor," Nate said. "Just to let you know I'm out for jury duty for a little while."

"Nathaniel," Ravenclaw replied, looking over the tops of his bifocals. "Yes. I saw the memo. You won't have any trouble with covering your classes, will you?"

"No, Rachael's going to handle it and I have everything mapped out for her." Despite Ravenclaw's advanced age and intimidating manner, he was actually very easy to talk to. Over the year and a half that Nate had worked with him, he had come to regard Professor Ravenclaw as the kind of teacher he'd like to be more like. Minus the weird name, though.

"Splendid. It's a shame you got chosen for it. I rather thought lawyers would shy away from the brighter people. They prefer people who are more easily swayed."

"I guess I didn't impress them enough."

"Well, be off with you. Fare thee well!" The professor then returned to his work.

Turning to leave, and closing the door softly behind him, Nate sighed. He had procrastinated enough. It was time to go.



"He returns!" Rachael said, seeing Nate enter the office. It was four weeks later. The trial had gone on and on, starting and stopping. They had heard mountains of evidence, listened and reviewed a hundred hours of testimony, and twenty four days into the trial, six days into deliberations, it was declared a mistrial and they started over with a new jury. Nate was crestfallen, but happy to shed himself of the burden.

"So it appears," Nate replied. "Happy to be back in the real world."

“If you can call a community college the real world.”

“Well, close enough. I also found I much prefer judging my students to judging psychopaths.”

“Plus, the students don’t have lawyers,” Rachael observed.

“Exactly.” Nate sat down at his desk and made a ‘lay it on me’ gesture. “Let me have it. I know you want to do it.”

“What? Oh, you mean give you all the backlogged papers? I don’t think I have any...” Rachael paused, taping her lower lip with her finger, thinking about the question. “Wait — there is this,” she said, dumping a six-inch-high stack of papers in front of him. “Is that what you were talking about?”

A low moan escaped Nate’s throat. “This is gonna be a late night.”

Rachael was in a teasing mood. “Not for me! I get to go home early for the first time in four weeks!” She sure hadn’t let the extended workload get her down, Nate told himself. She was as spunky as he had ever seen her. “There are still some cookies left. You can snack on those for strength.”

“Cookies?”

Rachael pointed to a tin perched on a stack of textbooks. “Homemade. From one of the other professors. I never got which one because the tag fell off. They’re good! Been snacking on them for a while. So be sure to finish them off before I get fat.”

Nate had a hard time believing she was battling any fat at all. In fact, she looked remarkably thin. She may have dropped as much as ten pounds since he last saw her, and it had taken at least five years off her face. Which was saying something, as she was 24 to begin with.

In fact, everything about her was a little different. She was definitely not at a loss for energy, she was thinner, and she was smiling. Rachael wasn’t a sourpuss — far from it — but she was usually more even-tempered. Even the clothes she wore were indicative of some sort of a change in her, as she wore a loose white tank top with a sparkling number 8 on it, with a purple miniskirt and ludicrously impractical heels.

Maybe she had a new boyfriend. *Good for her*, Nate thought.

Rachael grabbed her purse and headed for the door. “Well, anyway, have fun with your papers — I’m outta here. Say-o-nora!”

“Bye, Rache!” Nate chimed back. He settled into his chair. It was nice to be back in familiar surroundings, as he had been living out of hotel rooms for almost a month. They were nice rooms, but they couldn’t match the comfort of his own chair at his own desk. He reached over to pop open the lid on the tin of cookies and helped himself. Rachael was right. They were good.





A little over two hours later, the formulas on the papers he was grading were starting to get a bit fuzzy. It was a challenge to look at the same answers time after time and not begin to daydream. He had to shake it off and focus if he wanted to be out of here before nine, though.

“Knock knock,” said a voice from the doorway. “You’re Professor Corman, right?”

Nate turned around to see a young woman smiling at him. “Yes I am, and you are...?”

“I’m Miss Ozake. Professor Blutermann brought me on to help teach one of his classes.” She was a beautiful woman, dressed impeccably in a professional manner. Her long, straight thick Asian hair was wrapped up in a bun kept in place with what looked like chopsticks. Her face was young and her eyes were almond-shaped. She wore a dark grey women’s suit with a skirt, a faintly blue blouse with a maroon bow, and black heels. She at least dressed the part of being a teacher — even overdoing it a little.

“Well, it’s a pleasure to meet you, Miss.” He tossed the paper he was grading to the side.

“I’m so happy to be here. I’m honored to be working with such wise professors like you, Professor Corman.”

No one called him that. Even his students just called him Nate. He was a little embarrassed. “Uh, so which one of his classes are you teaching?”



Well, that was a silly question. “Let me guess — Japanese, right?”

“How did you guess,” she replied with another cute smile.

A moment passed.

“No, really. How did you guess?” She asked.

“Oh, uh...” Nate was at a loss. “I just figured that you, being, you know, Japanese and all...”

“Japanese? I was born in Cleveland,” she said with a laugh.

“To Japanese parents?”

“My parents were Polish.”

“Oh.” Nate was confused, but more mortified than anything else. “I guess I’m a bad judge of that sort of thing.”

“Shinpai shinaide,” she replied, bowing her head. “Don’t worry.”

“I guess this means we’ll be working together. Glad to have you on board...” He wanted her to fill in her first name.

“Miss,” she replied, keeping it formal.

“Miss Ozake. Nice to meet you.”

She bowed her head again. “Shitsureeitashimasu!” Then she headed back to her office.

For a Polish girl, she sure did give off a heavy Japanese vibe, Nate thought to himself. *Nah, she was probably just punking me about the Polish thing*, Nate concluded. *There was no way that girl wasn’t 100% Japanese. She was almost painfully Japanese.*

He picked his paper back up and got back to work. He took another look at the time and rolled his eyes. He was still hours away from getting this done. By the looks of it, he was back just in time, too. The grades on these papers were not good. His students were going to need some refreshers.



Nate left his class in confusion. He had never really had control of his courses today. Yesterday and the day before were much the same. In fact, ever since he had come back from jury duty, he had felt like his skills as a teacher were slipping away. He was still a master of his subject, but the ability to build a rapport with his students was not what it used to be.

When he was up in front of the class, things felt different. The students looked more serious to him, more attentive. They were quiet and listened to every word he said, never interrupting him or even so much as checking their phones

for a text. They even took notes, something he'd rarely seen before. This was only community college, for goodness sake, not Harvard. Nate was worried.

He was used to a little back and forth with his students and even some teasing here and there. Now they seemed so respectful that it was troubling. So today, in an effort to get them to loosen up, he scrapped his usual teaching ensemble in favor of a new look. He traded in the shirt and sweater vest for just wearing an old too-big dress shirt, untucked. It almost went to his thighs, it was so long. He also wore that pair of skinny jeans he'd accidentally bought online a year ago and was too busy to return. He was way too old for skinny jeans, especially this pair, which looked more like they were painted on than anything else. They were so thin, he tucked the legs inside his socks.

The idea was to give his students something to talk about, something to make fun of, but instead, they just sat there quietly and politely, taking notes and listening. What was wrong with them? Here he was, dressed like a clown, and not even a snicker in his direction.

Maybe dressing up was the wrong way to go. Why he had decided on such a strange course of action to fix his non-problem was something he really hadn't been able to get his head around. It seemed perfectly logical to him: to feel more comfortable, he needed to dress in these particular clothes. That was what a little voice in his subconscious was telling him, and he was to use any conscious excuse to justify it.

Worse yet, the grades were still dropping. Nate had tried to slow it down a little and go back to fundamentals, but the class grade average had dipped to 60%. Even with the new 'super studious' attitude of his students, they weren't absorbing the material. They just weren't working at the college level.

They'd probably do better if they weren't so obsessed with trends, Nate thought. The girls were so in lock-step with fashion, they were practically dressed exactly alike. Same with the boys. It didn't really matter. Next week they'd surely be on to a new trend.

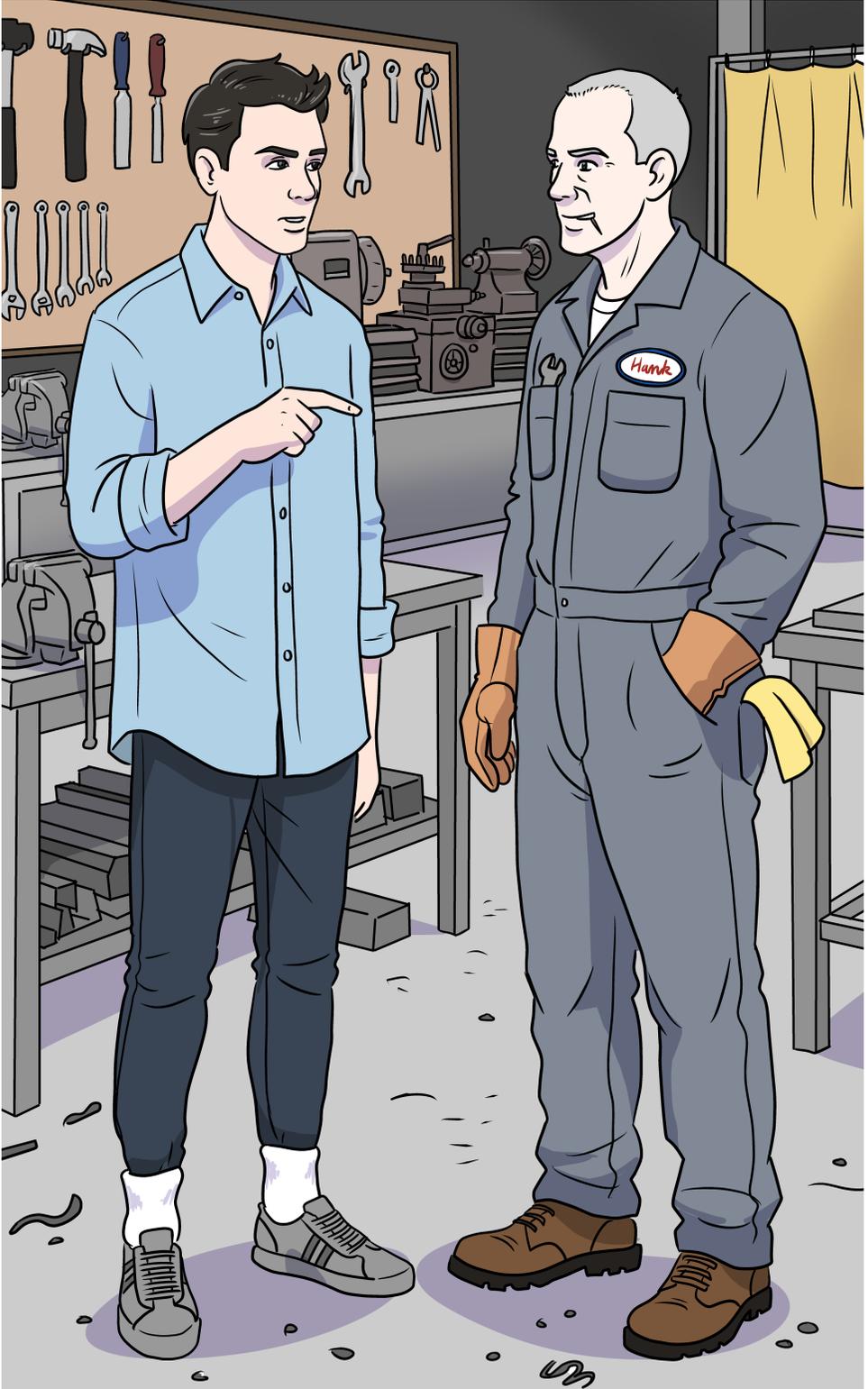
As he made his way back to his office, he ran into Hank Watters, walking back from the Metal Shop. The shop was attached to the back of the building and was where they did all the actual shop class. As usual, he smelled a bit burnt and had a few patches of soot on his pants. "Hola, Amigo!" He said, when he saw Nate passing his way. "I like the shirt!"

"Oh, thanks. Say... Uh..." Nate kind of pulled him over to the side for a minute and lowered his voice. "I was just wondering if you haven't noticed something odd in your class."

"Odd like what?" Hank asked.

"I don't know. Like they're better students, but at the same time, not better?"

"Hey, you're gonna have to run that one by me again."



“Okay. Like they’re paying attention, and being polite. Yet, the work that they’re doing is a little less than what it was just a few weeks ago?”

“Huh. Well, yeah, I think my guys are paying a little closer attention. But they’re still weldin’ the same joints they were doin’ since they got here.”

“What about the way they’re dressed?”

“Well, the boys pretty much dress the same way. But hey! That’s just because they have to wear the work overalls out there.”

“And the girls?”

“I don’t have any girls in my class,” Hank answered.

Upon reflection, Nate realized that maybe Hank wasn’t the best person to answer these questions. He wasn’t the most observant person, either. The unkempt debris on the floor seemed indicative of that.

“Just keep an eye out and let me know,” Nate said, ending the conversation.

“Will do!” Hank said, and headed on his way.

Nate headed into his office, and Rachael was already there, talking to one of the male students. Immediately, Nate fluffed out his hair, hoping it would make him look... *Wait*, he asked himself, why had he just done that?

“There you go,” she said, signing a piece of paper and handing it to the guy. “Thanks for coming by.”

“Thank you!” the boy said as he left in a haste.

“Who was that?” Nate asked.

Rachael rolled her chair up to her computer. “One of the students in your Nonlinear Systems Class.”

“What did he want?”

“He just wanted me to sign something for him.”

“A form? Is he transferring?”

“No, he just wanted me to sign something.”

“Oh, okay,” Nate said, stretching out before taking his seat at his desk. Rachael had always attracted attention from the boys in Nate’s classes. Rachael would sit to the side and hand out tests and papers and run the labs, and she had attracted her share of lovesick young men. Nate didn’t blame them one bit. Now it looked like they were just inventing excuses to talk to her. But they weren’t just asking her for autographs now, were they? Kids these days.

Fortunately for Nate, it was his *job* to talk to her, and didn’t need to make up thin excuses. After all, she was the closest thing he had to a girlfriend these days, even if she really wasn’t anything even close to being one at all.

Nate had not been in a relationship in what felt like forever, and he was not in any danger of one starting up anytime soon. He wasn’t the most social of

creatures, and he had no life outside of the college. He went home late every night and read or watched TV until he fell asleep. Not that he was morose about it. He felt having a girlfriend was more of an obligation to society than any burning need for companionship.

Although, lately, he had been feeling a little uncomfortable with his isolation. Not that he was looking for a girl, but he did feel a like it would be nice to have one person there to provide him with a little validation. Maybe more than one person.

“Do you think I look like an idiot?” Nate asked Rachael.

“What?” Rachael replied, as the question had come out of nowhere. “No! I like the new look. I think a belt would tie it all together, though.”

“No one would be able to see it, under the shirt.”

“Not under the shirt, over it.”

“Oh,” Nate said, thinking about it. “That might work.” He was inclined to regard Rachel’s fashion advice highly. He had been impressed with the way she had upped her game lately.

She had never been much of a flashy dresser, but lately Rachael was showing off a whole new side to her. Today she was dressed in black hi-top converse shoes with red stockings. She had a flouncy knee-length white skirt with petticoats, a wide gold lamé belt and a poofy red blouse with white lacy trim. She added large gold ball-shaped earrings dangling from her ears and bracelets made of the same. She had also added a red lamé ribbon to her hair to top it off. She looked like a celebrity, in Nate’s opinion. He liked it.

“Are you eating those cookies again?” Nate asked, seeing her nibble on one.

“They’re addictive, I swear.”

“But I got rid of them all!” Nate said, not mentioning that by ‘getting rid’ of them, he meant that he had eaten the remainder of the tin.

“Another batch showed up,” Rachael said, pointing to a second cookie tin placed on top of the first. “No idea where from.”

“Someone’s trying to kill us with sugar.” Nate grabbed two and crammed one in his mouth. “Sfo goodf,” he said. Rachael was quite prescient when she said they were addicting.

Despite the high consumption of calories, though, Rachael hadn’t gained an ounce, and had maybe lost a few, in Nate’s opinion. He himself had dropped seven in the last three days alone, but he was pretty sure that was water weight, not anything else.

Nate brought up the web browser on his computer and logged into the Plains County Community College online staff portal. He had to put in the assignments for next week. The thing was, he knew his students were way behind in the course syllabus, and forging ahead with his usual material was



only going to get the class more behind. He was left little choice but to dumb it down a little bit — just a tiny bit — if he didn't want to flunk the whole class.

As he twirled a lock of his hair, that's what he decided he had to do.



Well, now Nate was beginning to worry. Over the past two weeks, he had indeed dumbed down his course, not just a little bit, but by a lot. He had been reducing the complexity of the material day after day, and when he started to fear that he was just going to have to bring out multiplication tables and abacuses, they finally started to catch on. However, the class was now doing simple algebra at a beginners level. The high school level.

Nate wasn't sure what to do. In his eight year teaching career, he had never seen this kind of failure rate. It was a good thing it had leveled off, or else he would have had to think about resigning. No school would employ him for these abysmal results. As it was, he just hoped he could gently work his students back up to where they should be.

He asked Professor Ravenclaw about it, who had a predictably pessimistic reply. "If they can't get the answer from those foul little lightboxes of theirs, they stand little chance of grasping it for themselves, Nathaniel." He was referring to mobile phones, Nate assumed. The truth was that Nate didn't disagree with him, and he suspected his students were getting more and more reliant on outside information than figuring things out for themselves, sadly.

That concern for his students went beyond academic irregularities, though. He looked over one of his classes as they were silently finishing up a quiz. His previous observation that the students were dressing more and more alike proved salient, as the students were now starting to dress *exactly* alike. At first, he assumed it was some kind of prank or dare, but it wasn't going away.

Sure, it occurred him to just go up and ask one of the students was was going on, but last time he asked a student about their clothes, he got a stern lecture from the HR department about what were appropriate and inappropriate questions to ask young students from a sexual harassment perspective. So he was going to leave it alone for now.

Besides, he liked the style. The boys were wearing the same boring coats with "Sgt. Pepper" kind of collars, but the girls had a cute nautical theme going on. All in all, he had no problem with their taste in dressing alike. Just the creepiness of it. Nate was not quite sure — Wasn't *Children of the Corn* filmed around here?

Nate put aside his phone, where he was browsing cutepuppiez.com for the latest adorable baby animal photos, and sat back in his chair. Rachael was over to the side, dressed in a flamboyant outfit, a form-fitting yellow dress with huge

white ruffles at the shoulder and a brief white ruffled hem. She had matching yellow boots which also had a white ruffle, and a white ruffled collar with a pink band around the neck. She was silently mouthing the words to a song she was listening to on her big pink headphones.

Every so often, a male member of the class would glance up at Rachael, their eyes would start to get a little glassy, and then they'd get back to work. Nate's assistant had her own little fan club, and it was growing. Nate was a charter member, too. Because whenever he'd spot someone ogling his junior partner, he'd feel a little pang inside. A pang of — well, it was hard for him to admit, but it was jealousy.

Sure, Rachael was a smart girl who was blessed with good looks and great sense of style, but what was wrong with *him*? Why didn't *he* get looks like that from the students? He had heard stories of students getting crushes on their professors, but he'd never seen it for himself. It was like he was invisible. It was even more disappointing, considering that lately, he had tried every day to dress up a little fancier, but not so much as a glance in his direction.

He had added the belt that Rachael suggested. He had hung it loosely around his waist, over his long dress shirts, and it did bring his outfit together. The next day he had pulled his belt tighter. Then tighter some more. Since he had been losing so much weight lately, he wanted to show it off, and using that belt to demonstrate his new slender waistline was just natural.

Nate was a bit more critical of his appearance these days. He had a hard time not stopping at reflective surfaces to check his hair or his face. He tugged on his shirts, wishing they were more flattering to him, not showing off his chest at all. He would stick out his butt, wondering why it was so flat. "I should do some squats," he told himself over and over again.

Nate had also discovered that tight jeans were way more comfortable than he first suspected. The tightness was like a warm hug all day. So he went right out and bought a couple more pairs of skinny jeans, even tighter than the first pair. Even better, he found one pair that was basically like exercise pants, made out of stretchy spandex stuff, but made to look like jeans. He bought one black pair out of curiosity, and now he found himself wearing that same pair for the third day in a row.

Sitting next to Rachael, though, he wasn't going to catch anyone's attention no matter how good he looked. She got all the attention. As the students finished the quizzes and dropped them off in front of Nate, he was checking them, hopeful that the grades were going to get better. They weren't. If anything, these students, and the students in his other two classes, were incapable of improvement. There was a real danger that he wasn't going to get any of these kids through their courses.

Things were just all topsy-turvy right now. Nate felt like everything around him was just beyond his control. As the last student finished up and left, it was



just him and Rachael. She was still bopping along to her music, eyes closed and unaware that the class was over. He tapped her on the arm, and she opened her eyes. She quickly pulled off the headphones and asked, “fire drill?”

“No, class is over.”

“Already?”

“Hour and twenty minutes, like always,” Nate said, gathering the quizzes and getting up. “I gotta go talk to someone.” He handed the papers to Rachael. “Put those in the database for me, would you?”

“Yeah, I can do that!” She said with enthusiasm.

Nate wandered out into the hallway, and headed nowhere in particular. He made his way past a couple of dark classrooms and then the drinking fountains. It wasn't that huge a building, as it was just one floor and held only eight classrooms, a couple of large storage areas, the kitchen and then half a dozen smaller faculty offices. So when one wandered the hallways, one did not have a lot of ground to cover. He noticed a student standing outside one of the language classrooms and headed that direction.

It was a male student, in his coat and slacks, holding a sign that read “Disrespectful and rude” on it. He was either being punished or advertising for a new movie with a bad title.

“What's going on?” Nate asked the kid.

“I was disrespectful to Miss Ozake and my classmates,” he replied loudly. He acted like he was an army recruit, proclaiming his infraction. The only thing that was missing was a “sir” at the end.

He had been paying close attention to Miss Ozake since she had arrived, and had grown to appreciate her teaching skills. She truly commanded the attention of her students and they respected her for it. Her classes were orderly and efficient. Especially impressive was her grade average, which was rising like crazy. Her students were learning Japanese at an astonishing rate, and he could only wish for such results.

He decided to watch her in action, and quietly opened the door to sneak into the classroom, which wasn't sneaky at all, and Miss Ozake glared at him for making a disturbance. She was lecturing the class in Japanese, and Nate waved off any further interruption, quietly taking a spare seat to the side.

Nate didn't have a lot of time to observe before class ended, only about ten minutes, and what he did observe didn't help him out much. Miss Ozake was a stern teacher who ran her class with military precision and relied more on her demanding personality than any genius teaching techniques. Yet, she did get incredible results. The kids in her class all sounded like native Japanese speakers to his ears.

“Miss Ozake,” Nate said, approaching her after the students had left, “I hope you don’t mind me saying so, but I’m truly impressed with what you get out of these kids.”

“Thank you, Professor,” she replied with a smile. She treated him respectfully, because he was an adult, saving her austere manner for the students. “That means a lot coming from you.”

“The results are mind-blowing! I’ve never seen kids learning so fast!”

“They do seem to be absorbing the material quickly.”

“It’s very impressive. Listen, I was hoping you could do me a favor...” Nate said. “I’ve got the opposite problem. My students are floundering. I’ve never seen it like this. I’m worried I might lose my job.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. But what can I do?”

“I was hoping... Well, I know it’s a lot to ask... I’d like to see what it would be like if you used some of your teaching skills on my class, and I can observe what you’re doing.”

“You want me to teach your courses for you?”

“Just one class, one time. So I can watch and learn.”

“I don’t know much about your subject...”

“I’ll have it all laid out for you. If you have any trouble, I’ll be there to help you out.”



So the next Tuesday, Nate sat to the side and watched as Miss Ozake taught his Applied Probability course to his usual 13 students. It was a minor disaster. Whenever Miss Ozake tried to discipline a student for an incorrect answer or not paying attention, the eyes to the class fell on him to check to see if Nate would approve her actions. It tainted the whole experiment, knowing that both teacher and students were filtering what they were doing. Besides, the quiz grades were only slightly up from normal.

Sadly, Nate learned nothing.

“That was a waste of time,” Nate declared at his desk that evening. He leaned forward, his long hair covering his face in shame. He was feeling depressed. “I’m never going to figure this out!”

“Did you just snuffle?” Rachael asked, from her seat.

“Maybe,” Nate replied, too distraught to deny it.

“Look, you’re tearing yourself apart about this.” Rachael pulled her headphone down onto her neck. “Maybe you can ask her to do it again?”

“Maybe, but why? The same thing will happen all over again.”

“I can take some video of it. You can be out of the classroom and then watch it later. That could work!” Rachael said, excitedly.

“No, I have to be there, I have to see how she does it with my own eyes. I have to really feel it.”

“Well...” Rachael got a funny smirk on her face. “Just how *much* do you want to be there?”



“Hi, Mr. Yeager!” Rachael chimed, as she came inside the Apparel and Garment workshop. “I have a little project for you!” She was so upbeat these days, it was almost irritating.

“What’cha got?” Tom Yeager said, throwing his cigarette into his half-empty coffee. “Nice look you got goin’ there, Rache.”

Rachael was dressed in a tiered organza skirt, a pink t-shirt with a picture of a white fluffy kitten on it, white tights, white tennis shoes and a huge white bow on her head. “Thanks, Tom! I like you without the mustache!”

“It was time. So what’s this project? This isn’t one of those things where you try to get me to do free work for you and call it a class project, is it?”

“Of course it is!”

“Fair enough.”

“You know that look all the kids are going for these days? This big new fashion trend?”

“The one that kinda looks like everyone’s in the navy from the 1800’s?”

“That’s the one!”

“I was hoping you or one of your students could make one for me. One of the girls’ outfits.”

“Your size?”

“No... More like... Nate’s size.”

“Sure, no problem.”

“Just like that?”

“We’ve been making nothing but those outfits for the past two weeks. I practically can do it in the dark.”

“I was wondering where they all came from. How long will it take?”

“Pick it up at the end of the day.”

“Thanks, Tom! I really appreciate it. And Nate does, too.”



“Send me a photo of him when you get him dressed up in it.”

Rachael winked. “You have a devious mind, Tom!”



“I changed my mind,” Nate said, his arms clutched to his chest and his knees wobbling. “I’ll just videotape it.”

“We’ve come way too far for that, Professor,” Rachael said, as she finished spreading out the outfit Tom had made for them on the bed.

They were in Nate’s bedroom, at his modest apartment. Nate was stripped to his underwear, and having a very visible negative reaction to Rachael’s plan. He had been skeptical from the beginning, but now that the reality was laid out before him, he had no idea what he was thinking or how Rachael had talked him into this. Her plan? Simple. If Nate wanted to be in the room and not be detected as the teacher, then he needed to be one of the students.

“I could just be one of the male students!” Nate had pointed out.

“Like hell you could,” Rachael said. “You know you’re not exactly the manliest of men, Nate.”

That was an unwarranted cheap shot, he thought. “Yeah... But...”

“When’s the last time you shaved?”

“My face?” Nate felt his baby-smooth chin. She was right. He couldn’t even remember when he last grabbed a razor. He recalled that he had cultivated a Grizzly Adams beard in college, but had been clean shaven since. Now, it felt like he’d never had a whisker in his life. “Still, I don’t know why you want me to dress up like a female.”

“When we’re all done, you can tell me if I’m right or not. I think you’ll make a cute girl.”

There was just something about the way she phrased that sentence that made his resistance dip, and it dipped just low enough to let Rachael do what she wanted.

Nate should have rejected the idea flatly when she proposed it in his office. He should have refused to let her make the outfit for him. He absolutely shouldn’t have agreed to letting her come over to dress him up. And he positively, beyond any doubt, should have stopped her from having him strip down naked, never put on a young girls’ panty and bra and then wait for instructions. He kept reminding himself that he needed to put up some kind of resistance.

“What do you want me to do next?” Nate asked, compliantly.

“Aren’t you the agreeable one?” Rachael remarked.

“Isn’t that what you want?”

“Let’s work on your body. I see you already shaved your legs.”

Nate looked down, his skinny legs were bare, but he was absolutely sure he hadn’t shaved them. Well, mostly sure. In fact, he really couldn’t decide if he ever had hair on them to begin with. He could see both the study hirsute legs he had grown up with and the skinny smooth legs he now had. Which one was correct? He couldn’t quite say.

“Is that okay?” Nate asked.

“It’s just fine,” Rachael replied. “Now, let’s get started. First, the socks.”

Nate took what Rachael gave him, and couldn’t figure it out at first. They weren’t like normal socks. He put one on, feeding it over his foot, then his calf, then his knee. They were very tall socks. They were tight, which he loved, and had decorative thin stripes at the top, which ended four inches up his thigh.

Once he had the other on, he took a few moment to flex his leg and examine the look. He looked over at Rachael, who was admiring from across the room. “Are you sure?” Nate wondered.

Rachael nodded. “Sure I’m sure. All the girls in your classes are wearing these.”

Nate felt all sorts of strange in the tall socks, the flimsy scanty panties and the tight pull of the bra straps on his shoulders. “This is a bad idea,” he said.

“This is the only way, Nate. You said it yourself.” She handed him the skirt.

“I did?” he asked himself. He wasn’t sure that was true. “Yeah, the only way,” he then added, trying and reassure himself. The skirt seemed so small, so delicate. It was impossible to believe it was actually clothing. How it was supposed to conceal or protect him was a mystery. He bent down and stepped into the pleats. He pulled it up his legs and after fumbling for some kind of zipper in front, Rachael fastened it at the back for him.

Now with it on, he *still* wondered how it was supposed to conceal or protect him. It felt like he was wearing almost nothing at all, his nearly-bare butt still feeling the cool breezy air. Even more confusing to Nate was how it even fit him around the waist. He hadn’t lost *this* much weight, had he?

As he tried to tug it down farther, and not succeeding, he gave a look to Rachael who already knew exactly what he was thinking.

“Yes, it’s supposed to fit like that *and* feel like that.”

“Like it’s not even there?”

Rachael shrugged. “That’s the deal! But you’ll get used to it. Even like it.”

“That’s hard to believe. I’m going to have to be careful with every move I make.”

“Yes, you will.” Rachael handed him the top, a short-sleeved white blouse that had a broad turquoise collar, matching the color of the skirt. Nate turned and shook it a few times to see what was what and then put it on. A pair of women’s loafers were the final item of clothing, but he didn’t want to put them on right now. After all, they were indoors.

“There!” Rachael said. “Now, the hair.”

Before he could even look to see what was happening, he was accosted by a massive flurry of pink. It got in his eyes and his mouth and he had to spit and pull it out. “Pink?” Nate said, exasperated. “A pink wig? Tell me how this could possibly make me look like a real college girl!”

“Well...” Rachael said, finishing up her fiddling with his wig. “Why don’t you tell me?” She swiftly turned him around so he could see himself in the closet mirror.

Nate kind of stood there, staring at his reflection much as a house pet might stare at their own reflection — unsure of who was behind the glass, and feeling threatened. He took a timid step forward, to see if the image would match his own movement. It did. It really was him in the mirror.

“How is this possible?” He asked, his voice straining to speak the words. “I really look like a girl!”

Rachael agreed. “And a cutie at that!”

Nate took another look at himself. “Cute?” He swung his hips back and forth, swishing his skirt and played with the wig hair. “You really think I’m cute?”

“If you aren’t the cutest little thing I ever did see!”

Nate turned a leg and gave himself a smile. It was important to him, it was important to be cute. If he was going to be a girl, he wanted to be a cute one. The very cutest one, actually.

But reality came back to him and slapped him in the face. “Wait. What’s happened to me?” He asked aloud. “I’m a 35 year old man! Not a teenage girl! What’s *happened* to me?”

Rachael rubbed her anxious mentor’s shoulders. “What do you mean? Nate, you’ve always been a little on the small and slender side. Just because...”

Nate interrupted. “Since when? I weigh a hundred and eighty pounds... I could slam dunk a basketball in college...” He pointed to his reflection. “This isn’t me! How could it *possibly* be me?”

“Calm down, sweetie pie. So you might not be the man you thought you were. I still like you. Everyone likes you. It doesn’t matter what you look like. Or *thought* you looked like before you lost all that weight.”

“It doesn’t?” Nate said.

