

ADULTS ONLY

80 pages 20 illustrations

WHY CAN'T YOU BE MORE LIKE YOUR SISTER

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack



TEENS
**Trans-
Formed**
TG



J O E S I X P A C K

**WHY CAN'T
YOU BE MORE
LIKE YOUR
SISTER**

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack
A Teens Transformed story



2025 Edition

Design & layout © 2025

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WHY CAN'T YOU BE MORE LIKE YOUR SISTER?

Drake Maddox crouched behind a rusty sedan, holding a stolen alternator. The parking lot light barely reached him. The shadows looked surreal as the wind rattled the chain-link fence. He could hear traffic from the highway and the sound of litter blowing across the pavement. His car sat nearby with the hood open, showing an engine that looked beyond repair. Hoses were cracked, belts looked worn out, and the radiator had given up.

He looked at the alternator in his hand. "Should've been mine to begin with," he said. "Like I'm supposed to pay for this junk." He shoved the alternator into his backpack, the zipper caught. He forced it closed and stood up, rolling his shoulders. He'd install it here, but he was worried that there was a camera somewhere that might catch him in the act. He watched the darkened auto parts store, making sure nothing had changed, with no indication he had broken in. The doors reflected the weak light of the 'Closed' sign inside.

He stood there a moment and let himself think the whole thing had been easy. He got in, grabbed what he needed, and got out. There was no alarm, no one chasing him. The store was quiet, and he was sure he would get away with it. He closed the hood of his car.

Then he heard a car door slam, clear and sharp in the quiet. He froze.

A beam of light sliced across the lot, swinging toward him.

"Hey! You there!" a sharp and commanding voice said loudly.

Drake turned slowly, muscles tensing, ready to bolt. Two police officers stood near their patrol car, flashlights trained on him. One had his hand resting on his holster, the other took a step forward.

"Don't move," the lead officer ordered, tersely.

Drake lifted his hands slightly, palms out, not quite surrendering but not looking for immediate trouble either. His chest tightened.

"Just working on my car," he said, keeping his voice even.

The second officer, a stocky guy with a thick mustache, nodded toward Drake's backpack. "What's in the bag?"

Drake hesitated. "Tools."

The first officer, taller, leaner, took another step forward, his flashlight bouncing off the dull metal of Drake's car. His eyes narrowed. "Pop the bag open."

Drake exhaled sharply, dragging his feet as he swung the backpack off his shoulder. He knew stalling wouldn't do him much good, but instincts kicked in anyway. He fumbled with the zipper, cursing when it snagged again.

The second officer shifted his stance, impatient. "Let's go."

With one final tug, the zipper gave way. The top flopped open, exposing the alternator nestled against a pile of wrenches and greasy rags.

The first officer let out a slow breath. "Auto parts store closed hours ago. Want to explain how you got your hands on that?"

Drake forced a smirk. "Found it."

The mustached officer barked a humorless laugh. "Yeah? Where?"

Drake shrugged. "Dumpster."

The taller officer exchanged a look with his partner. "That so?"

Drake let his gaze drift toward the street. The patrol car was angled toward the exit. If he ran, he had a solid five-second head start — maybe six if they were slow on the draw. But that was a big if.

"Why don't you step away from the car," the first officer said.

Drake didn't budge, calculating his next move.

The second officer took a half-step closer. "Kid, don't make this harder than it needs to be."

Drake swallowed. His jaw tensed. The weight of the stolen part in his bag felt heavier by the second. The moment Drake's muscles coiled, the officers knew.

He bolted.

The young tough dropped the backpack and ran as fast as he could. Boots scuffed against the pavement, slipping slightly on loose gravel. Years of avoiding PE were now catching up with him, but he was still fast enough to beat some fat cops.

"Stop right there!" one of the officers shouted, but Drake didn't.

The lot wasn't big, but it felt like a mile. The shadows were deep, the flickering streetlamp barely holding back the darkness. His car was too far — he'd never make it. But the alley? Maybe. If he could just...

A heavy force slammed into his back.



Drake hit the ground hard, cheek scraping against the asphalt. A grunt ripped from his throat as a knee pinned between his shoulder blades. The rough press of a hand gripped the back of his jacket, yanking him onto his side.

“Dumb move, kid,” the mustached officer growled. “Real dumb.”

Drake twisted, but the taller officer was already there, grabbing his arm and yanking it behind his back. Cold metal clamped around his wrist.

“Let me go, man!” Drake snapped, kicking out, but the taller officer pressed down on his leg, stopping him cold.

“Keep fighting, we’ll add resisting,” the officer warned, his voice calm but edged with irritation.

Drake breathed hard through his nose, chest heaving as the handcuffs clicked shut around his wrists. A second later, they hauled him up to his feet, none too gently.

The squad car’s lights strobed against the storefront, painting everything in flashes of red and blue. The hum of the engine filled the empty parking lot, an unwanted soundtrack to the scene.

A man stood at the entrance of the store, arms crossed over his chest, a phone clutched in one hand. His face was tight with barely restrained anger, deep lines carving into his weathered skin. The fluorescent lights from inside cast a sharp glow over him, making his glare all the more piercing.

“That him?” the taller officer asked, keeping a firm grip on Drake’s arm.

“Damn right it’s him.” The store owner jabbed a finger toward Drake. “Caught him on the cameras. Been sneaking around here for days.”

Drake huffed, rolling his shoulders as much as the cuffs would allow. “It’s just one stupid part,” he muttered. “Don’t act like it’s a big deal.”

The store owner’s nostrils flared. “One part?” His grip on the phone tightened. “You think I run a charity? You’ve been casing my store, punk. Bet this ain’t the first time.”

The mustached officer sighed, shaking his head. “Figures.”

Drake scoffed, shifting his weight, the cuffs digging into his wrists. His face was blank, but the irritation in his posture was clear.

The taller officer nudged him toward the squad car. “Time to take a ride.”

Drake shook and squirmed, trying to get free. He was a little too young to understand that this was just going to result in more pain. He understood that a little bit better when he got slammed into the side of the patrol car. “Watch your head,” the cop said.

The back door of the cruiser opened, the interior dark, the faint scent of old leather and sweat wafting out. He slid in, the seat slick under him. The door slammed shut with a finality that sent a ripple of silence through Drake's body.

Outside, the officers spoke in low voices with the store owner. Drake didn't care what they were saying. He leaned back against the seat, tilting his head to the side, staring out the window as the red and blue lights pulsed against the storefront.

His reflection stared back at him, mouth set in a bored line, expression unreadable. He hated getting arrested.



The air in the holding cell was thick with stale sweat and bad decisions. Mostly the sweat, though. The overhead fluorescent light buzzed, flickering every few seconds like it was as tired of this place as the people inside. *Hadn't they heard of LEDs?* Drake wondered. The concrete bench was cold against Drake's back, but he didn't move. His boots — scuffed, the soles worn almost smooth — were propped up against the edge, his arms folded across his chest.

A guy across from him — mid-thirties, scruffy, reeking of cheap liquor — glanced his way but looked down just as quick. Another detainee, a kid barely older than him, sat hunched in the far corner, arms wrapped around his knees. Drake ignored them.

The place was dead quiet except for the occasional murmur of voices from the hallway beyond the bars. Phones ringing. Officers talking. The occasional bark of a radio. The whole place had a slow, grinding machine that appeared to chew people up and spit them out.

Drake shifted, exhaling through his nose. "I gotta be out soon," he muttered, voice low. His fingers tapped against his jacket sleeve, leather creaking. "Ain't like I killed somebody."

A snort came from the guy across the way, but he didn't say anything. Drake smirked.

Footsteps echoed down the hall — heavy, deliberate. A second later, an officer leaned against the bars, arms crossed. His uniform was crisp, badge dull under the dim light. His eyes scanned the cell before settling on Drake.

"Your mom's on her way, kid," the officer said, voice dry, bored. Then, with a smirk: "Bet she's thrilled."

Drake didn't move, didn't even blink.

“Yeah?” He tilted his head slightly, a slow, lazy grin curling at the edges of his mouth. “Well, she should be used to it by now.”

The officer let out a short laugh, shaking his head.

“You think this is funny?”

Drake shrugged, the leather of his jacket shifting with the movement.

“It’s fucking *hilarious*.”

The officer studied him for a moment, eyes sharp, searching.

“You keep playing this game, Maddox, and one day, it won’t be a holding cell,” he said, tapping a finger against the bars. “It’ll be the real thing. Then we’ll see how funny you think it is.”

Drake’s smirk didn’t fade. He just leaned his head back against the wall, boots still propped up, eyes half-lidded like he could fall asleep right there.

The officer exhaled, long and slow. Then he pushed off the bars, shaking his head as he walked off.

Drake stayed where he was, unmoving. The light above flickered again, buzzing like an angry wasp.



Susan Maddox walked with sure, deliberate steps. She knew exactly where to go. She had been here before. Her tailored blazer, crisp blouse, and neatly pressed skirt screamed professionalism, but the tightness in her jaw betrayed the barely contained fury beneath the polished surface. Her hair, normally smoothed into perfection, was the slightest bit ragged, a sign of a night already pushed beyond its limits.

She stopped at the front desk, her manicured fingers gripping the strap of her handbag like it was the only thing keeping her tethered.

“Where is he?” Her voice was soft, even, but laced with something cold.

The officer at the desk barely glanced up before nodding toward the back. “Holding cell.” He tapped a clipboard. “Good news is, store owner’s not pressing charges. Said it wasn’t worth the paperwork.”

Susan exhaled sharply, her nails digging into the strap.

“Lucky him,” she muttered. “You need to take my bag, right? It’s best I don’t have anything to throw at him.”



She followed the officer down the hall, past rows of desks cluttered with coffee cups. The officer stopped at a set of thick metal bars and gestured inside.

“Please don’t raise your voice,” he said under his breath, before stepping aside.

Drake was exactly where she expected him — slouched against the concrete wall, legs stretched out, arms crossed over his chest. His leather jacket was still on, his expression unreadable except for the slight smirk tugging at his mouth.

The light above flickered again, buzzing like it was sick of the scene playing out beneath it.

Susan didn’t speak right away. She just stood there, one hand resting on her hip, the other ready to point as she shouted.

Drake’s smirk widened. “Hey, Mom.”

Susan’s lips pressed into a thin line. She looked him over, taking in the scuffed boots, the lazy slouch, the defiant glint in his eye.

“You’re a real disappointment, you know that?” she said loudly, as she pointed.

Drake’s smirk didn’t fade. If anything, it deepened.

“Since when have I worried about impressing you?”

The words hung between them like a blade.

Susan inhaled sharply, then turned to the officer. “What do I need to sign?”

“Paperwork’s at the front desk. He’s free to go.”

“Of course he is,” she muttered. “A night or two in jail might teach him a lesson.” She turned back to Drake, her eyes hard. “Get up.”

Drake didn’t move right away. He stretched, slow and deliberate, before standing. He rolled his shoulders like he had all the time in the world, then sauntered toward the cell door. The officer unlocked it with a sharp clang.

She turned sharply on her heel. “Let’s go.” Drake followed, his boots echoing against the tile.



The front door slammed behind them, shaking the picture frames on the wall. The house was dim, the only light spilling from the kitchen, casting long shadows over the living room.

Susan didn't even take off her coat. She paced the small space between the couch and the coffee table, her hands cutting through the air as she spoke.

"You've been stealing, lying, skipping school... Getting arrested! — you think I'm going to tolerate this behavior?" Her voice, usually measured, sharp with restraint, cracked with frustration.

Drake shrugged off his leather jacket and tossed it onto the couch like he hadn't just spent six hours in a holding cell. He kicked off his boots with a lazy thud, rolling his shoulders before slouching against the armrest.

"It's not like I hurt anyone," he muttered, arms crossing over his chest. "You know how much that old man wanted for a manifold gasket? He can afford it."

Susan stopped mid-step, turning to face him fully. Her expression tightened, her fists clenching at her sides.

"That's your excuse?" she snapped. "That someone can afford to lose what you steal?"

Drake scoffed, shaking his head. "You act like I robbed a bank or something."

Susan exhaled sharply, running a hand through her hair, then let it drop. She gestured toward him, her fingers trembling slightly.

"This — this right here," she said, voice low, edged with something heavier than anger. "This is why I don't believe you'll change."

Drake rolled his eyes, sinking further into the couch.

"You think this is a joke," Susan pressed, stepping closer. "You think getting dragged into a police station in cuffs, sitting in a holding cell..." She cut herself off, shaking her head. "You are throwing your life away."

Drake looked up at her, his smirk lazy, indifferent. "Hey, you raised me."

Susan's nerves snapped. For a moment, she just stared at him, her expression unreadable. Then she let out a bitter laugh, short and humorless.

"Your *father* raised you," she said. "And he's not here to protect you anymore."

The house was quiet except for the hum of the refrigerator and the faint ticking of the wall clock. The argument had died down for a moment, but the air still crackled with the remnants of anger. The dim glow from the kitchen light barely reached the living room, casting jagged shadows across the floor.

Susan stood near the fireplace, arms crossed, fingers gripping her sleeves as though restraining herself from lashing out again. Her face was tight, her breath measured. Drake remained slouched on the couch, one leg stretched out, the other bent at the knee. His fingers drummed restlessly against his thigh, his jaw clenched as he stared at the ceiling.



Then, Susan let out a sharp breath, her patience snapping like brittle glass.

“Why can’t you be more like your sister?”

Drake’s fingers froze mid-tap. His entire body stiffened, but Susan didn’t stop.

“She’s responsible, respectful, and actually cares about her future!”

Drake sat up straighter, his eyes narrowing as Susan strode to the mantle. She picked up a framed photo, turning it toward him.

“Look at her,” Susan said, her voice laced with something dangerously close to bitterness. The photograph caught the dim light — Rebecca Anne, beaming in her perfectly pressed clothes, smiling like an idiot. “She’s everything you’re not.”

“Oh, here we go again,” he said, his voice cold, but beneath it, something burned. “Perfect Rebecca Anne, the golden child. Always following orders like a damn robot.”

Susan’s eyes flashed.

“Maybe if I was as boring as her,” Drake continued, his voice rising, “you’d actually leave me alone.”

Susan’s grip on the frame tightened.

Drake pushed himself off the couch, stepping forward. “You think I like being compared to her all the time?” His voice cracked with something raw, something barely held together. “She’s not some saint, Mom. You just don’t see it because she’s never here!”

Susan’s head snapped up, her face pale but her eyes dark with fury.

“You’re right,” she said, her voice icy. “She’s never here because she’s working hard, making something of herself. Unlike you, who can’t even stay out of trouble for five minutes!”

Drake took another step forward, his breath sharp.

Susan’s grip on the photo frame trembled, and for a moment, it seemed like she might hurl it to the ground.

Then she did something worse.

“You’re no good,” she whispered. “And you always will be.”

Drake stared at her, his breath shallow. His fingers twitched at his sides like they wanted to curl into fists but couldn’t quite manage it. His jaw clenched so hard it ached. The weight of her words had broken his cockiness for a moment.

Susan let out a slow breath, pressing her fingers against her temples. The moment stretched on and on.

Then, finally, she straightened, smoothing out the front of her blouse like she could erase everything that had just been said. She inhaled deeply, visibly trying to steady herself.

"I'm done, Drake," she said, her voice flat. "Done letting you run wild. Things are going to change around here."

Drake let out a sharp, humorless laugh.

"What, you gonna ground me?" His eyes were dark, unreadable. "Like that's gonna do anything."

Susan shook her head.

"No," she said quietly. "Grounding isn't enough."

She set Rebecca Anne's photo back onto the mantle with a deliberate motion.

"Starting tomorrow, I'm making some real changes."



The metal clink of the padlock snapping shut echoed down the hallway.

Drake stood barefoot on the cold hardwood floor, arms crossed over his bare chest, a towel slung low around his waist. Droplets of water clung to his skin, still fresh from the shower. He stared at the door to his room, now secured with a thick brass padlock, disbelief flickering across his face.

"You're not serious," he said, his voice edged with irritation.

Susan stood firm, the key clutched tightly in her hand. She didn't look away, didn't hesitate. Her blazer was crisp, her hair neatly pulled back, the image of someone who had already been awake for hours, setting things in motion.

"Oh, I'm completely serious," she said, her voice calm but sharp. "You want to act like a delinquent? Fine. But you're not going to do it from that thing you call a room, surrounded by trash and half-eaten food." She dropped the key into her pocket. "You don't deserve a place of your own. You're always planning trouble in there."

Drake let out a short laugh, shaking his head. He took a step forward, the floorboards creaking beneath him.

"This is insane," he said. "What am I supposed to do? Sleep in the garage?"

Susan's expression didn't waver. "The garage is locked tight."

Drake narrowed his eyes. "Why?"

"So you can't use your car."

His jaw tightened. His hands flexed at his sides. “What the fuck are you doing, Mom? Are you kicking me out?”

Susan took a step past him and pointed down the hall.

“You’re sleeping in your sister’s room.”

Drake turned his head slowly, looking down the hallway toward the door that had barely been touched in months. Rebecca Anne’s room. The pristine, untouchable shrine to perfection.

His breath came out slow, controlled. His fingers curled into fists. “Like hell.”

“Do what you want. Stand out here in the hall until you catch a cold and die.”

Drake stormed down the hall, his bare feet thudding against the hardwood. His towel was he had to cover himself, but he barely cared. His temper burned hotter than the steam still clinging to his skin from the shower. He shoved open the door to Rebecca Anne’s room and stopped dead in the doorway.

His face twisted in disgust. The room was a pastel nightmare. The walls were painted soft pink, the kind of shade that made his stomach turn. White lace curtains framed the windows, filtering the morning light into an almost ethereal glow. A frilly bedspread, adorned with tiny embroidered flowers, covered the perfectly made bed.

Then came the ribbons. They were everywhere. On the bedposts, tied neatly around the vanity chair, hanging in tidy little bows from the closet handles. A row of stuffed animals sat against the pillows, their glassy eyes staring straight at him, like they knew he didn’t belong here.

Drake groaned, dragging a hand down his face.

“You can’t be serious.” His voice dripped with disbelief as he turned to face Susan, who stood just behind him, arms crossed, expression unyielding. “This isn’t a bedroom; it’s a creepy dollhouse.”

Susan didn’t flinch. “Maybe the change of scenery will calm you down,” she said coolly. “God knows your room hasn’t done any good.”

Drake scoffed, stepping further inside, his shoulders tensed like the walls themselves were closing in on him. He turned in a slow circle, eyes scanning every inch of the overly perfect space. His gaze landed on the white vanity in the corner, complete with an ornate mirror and an array of neatly organized makeup, brushes, and perfume bottles.

His lip curled.

“This is a joke,” he muttered under his breath.

Susan took a step forward. “And don’t you dare break anything of your sister’s,” she warned, her tone sharp as steel.

Drake let out a sour laugh, shaking his head as he turned back to her.

“Right,” he said, voice dripping with sarcasm. “Wouldn’t want to disturb the sacred shrine of Saint Rebecca Anne Maddox.”

The sound of Susan’s heels clicking against the hardwood faded down the hall. A moment later, the front door shut with a decisive thud. Drake stood frozen for a beat, jaw clenched, fists still curled at his sides. His entire body hummed with frustration, tension coiled tight in his shoulders.

He headed back to his locked door, and shook the handle. The tugged on the lock. He threw himself at the door. He could, he thought to himself, just grab a hammer or a table or something and ram it through the door, but that was just going to wind up with him getting thrown out of the house. For now, he was going to have to let his mother think she won, before he wore her down and let him have his room back. He would be in his own bed by six tonight, he figured.

He returned to his sister’s room, cringing as he walked inside a room that seemed designed to scare away men in the first place. Then, with a sharp exhale, he turned toward Rebecca Anne’s closet.

“This is complete bullshit,” he muttered under his breath, running a hand through his damp hair.

The pristine white doors of the wardrobe loomed in front of him, untouched, spotless — just like everything else in this sickly sweet shrine to perfection. He grabbed one of the knobs and yanked the door open.

A row of pastel blouses, dresses, and skirts hung neatly in front of him, organized by color like a damn department store. Soft pinks faded into lavenders, then powder blues. He squinted at the ridiculous coordination, his scowl deepening.

“God, she’s such a perfect little princess,” he muttered, rifling through the hangers.

His fingers pushed through silk and lace, each item more unbearable than the last. Dresses with tiny embroidered flowers. Skirts with delicate bows. Sweaters so soft they felt like they’d disintegrate if he even looked at them too hard.

Drake gritted his teeth and dug deeper, desperate for anything remotely neutral.

Behind a section of pristine blouses, his hand finally landed on something different. He pulled it forward — jeans. Plain, blue denim. A flicker of relief

passed through him — until he noticed the delicate floral embroidery along the pockets.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” he muttered, staring at the tiny stitched flowers with disdain.

Still, they were better than a dress. With a heavy sigh, he yanked the jeans off the hanger and threw them onto the bed.

Next, he needed a shirt.

Drake turned back to the closet, eyes scanning the rows of perfectly folded sweaters stacked on the shelves. Most of them were pink, lavender, or baby blue — no chance in hell. He pulled open the bottom drawer, rummaging through the neatly arranged tops.

Finally, he found a white T-shirt. Simple. Plain.

Then he turned it over, seeing a lace trim decorated the neckline, delicate and frilly.

Drake groaned, squeezing his eyes shut for a second. “This is the best I’m gonna get,” he grumbled, yanking the shirt from the drawer. He tossed it onto the bed with the jeans, then ran a hand over his face.

Drake yanked the white T-shirt over his head, grimacing as the lace trim brushed against his collarbone. He grabbed the hem and stretched it downward, trying to rip the delicate frill away, but it was sewn too well.

“Fuck it,” he muttered.

The fabric clung to his frame in a way his usual loose shirts never did, and it made his skin crawl. He reached for the jeans next, stepping into them and tugging them up. The denim was snug — too snug. His usual jeans hung low and loose, but these clung to his legs, the stiff fabric limiting his movement.

Drake caught his reflection in the vanity mirror across the room and scowled. The floral embroidery along the pockets stood out like a neon sign. The lace trim on the shirt only made it worse.

“I look ridiculous,” he muttered, running a hand through his messy hair.

It wasn’t just the outfit. It was the room. The walls, the ribbons, the sickly-sweet scent of Rebecca Anne’s perfume lingering in the air. The whole place felt like it was closing in on him, suffocating him with its pink femininity.

With a sigh, he crouched down and rummaged through the bottom of the closet, looking for shoes. His own sneakers and boots were locked away with the rest of his stuff, so he had no choice but to grab a pair of Rebecca Anne’s running shoes. They were plain white — thank God for small favors.

He slid them on, ignoring how much softer they felt than his usual shoes.

Drake sat on the floral-patterned bedspread, bouncing his knee as he checked the clock on the wall. Still an hour before school. Too much time to think.

He drummed his fingers against his knee. This was not his room. It was never supposed to be for anyone else but his sister, someone who color-coded her life and somehow made vanilla a personality trait. Rebecca Anne was out there, somewhere, making straight A's and probably saving kittens, while he was stuck here among pink ribbons and lace, the only things in this house more allergic to him than the cat.

He looked at the desk in the corner, the white one he wasn't supposed to touch. For years, he was told, "That's your sister's," like it was sacred, like she kept state secrets in there. He stood up, crossing the floor that was definitely too clean, and set his hand on the surface. Not a speck of dust, which seemed to confirm that, in this house, only dust was less welcome than he was.

He muttered, "Might as well see what perfect Rebecca Anne is hiding in here." The drawer stuck a little, which almost made him respect her less, but then it slid open and he got a face full of vanilla. Of course her drawers smelled good. He didn't even know that was possible.

Inside, it looked like the office supply aisle at the drugstore. Notebooks, all labeled. Notebooks for "Chemistry," for "Reflections," for "French." The pens were lined up by color, and not even in rainbow order, but in this bizarre pattern that probably meant something to her and no one else. There was a silver locket, which seemed like the kind of thing you'd find on a greeting card, and a ceramic cat that looked smug as if it knew how Drake felt right now.

He pushed things around with his index finger, mostly out of boredom, until he found something hard wedged in the back. He pulled it out. It was a laminated high school ID card. That's not unusual unless you knew Rebecca Anne. She'd been shipped off to some boarding school in Europe, the kind of place with uniforms and fountains and not a single Drake. He'd suspected his mother did it to keep him from a "bad influence" on Rebecca Anne.

He squinted at the card, holding it under the lamp. There was her name, Rebecca Anne Maddox, her photo, smiling the way she smiled for every camera, and her student ID number. Under that, in all caps, was the name of his school. The school where he went. The place she wasn't supposed to be.

He said, "What the hell?" quietly, which sounded a lot less dramatic than he felt. He turned the card over, as if the answer might be hiding on the back. No such luck. All he got was his sister's flawless smile beaming up at him, like she

knew something he didn't. He held the card tighter, the plastic bending in his hand.

She was supposed to be far away, giggling over tea parties with her private school friends. So what was this for? He put the card down, let out a breath, and wondered what kind of surprise this was supposed to be. More secrets kept by his mother.

When the doors downstairs opened and shut again, indicating his mother was home, Drake was ready to get on her case. He stormed down the stairs, the wooden steps creaking under his weight. The ID card burned in his grip, the laminated plastic digging into his palm. His heart pounded, frustration mounting with every step. The too-tight jeans and lace-trimmed shirt only fueled his irritation, making him feel ridiculous, like a joke in his own home.

Susan was in the living room, undoing her scarf as she heard her son stomp into the room.

"What's this?" he demanded, his voice sharp, almost accusing. He held the card right in her face.

Susan barely glanced up, raising an eyebrow. "It's Rebecca Anne's school ID."

Drake's grip tightened. "Yeah, I can see that," he snapped. "But why does it have *my* school on it? I thought she was at that fancy boarding school."

Susan set herself down on the sofa, folding her hands neatly in her lap. She didn't look rattled, didn't even blink at his tone. "She's transferring," she said simply.

Drake stared at her, dumbfounded. His mind scrambled for an explanation, something that made sense. "What do you mean, she's transferring?" he asked, voice lower now, but still tense.

Susan exhaled, sitting up a little straighter. "She'll be attending public school later this year."

Drake scoffed, shaking his head. "Why the hell would she do that? You've spent years hiding her in that perfect little school so she wouldn't have to see..." He gestured vaguely. "...me."

Susan's expression didn't change. "It's closer," she said, her tone matter-of-fact. "And it'll give her more time to focus. Besides, I can't afford that school forever."

Drake took a step back, his mind reeling. His fingers tightened around the laminated ID as if squeezing it hard enough could change what he'd just heard.

"Wait... so she's coming home?" His voice was sharp, disbelieving. "Like... full-time?"

Susan met his gaze, her expression calm, unwavering. “Yes, Drake. She’ll be home year-round. Isn’t that nice?”

Drake let out a sharp, bitter laugh, shaking his head. He held up the ID card like it was evidence in a crime scene.

“Yeah, because that’s exactly what I need — more time with Miss Perfect.” He waved the card through the air in frustration. “The best thing about her is that she’s never here! She’s always off at her stupid school, winning trophies or whatever. I don’t need her hanging around here and making me look bad every day.”

Susan leaned back in her chair, crossing one leg over the other. She was completely unfazed by his outburst.

“Well,” she said, folding her hands in her lap, “maybe if you got your act together, you wouldn’t feel so threatened by her success.”

Drake’s breath came out sharp through his nose. His jaw tightened, a muscle twitching near his temple.

“I’m not threatened by her!” he snapped. His free hand clenched into a fist at his side. “I just don’t want her around, okay? She’s already your goody-goody favorite, and now I gotta deal with her all the time?”

Susan sighed, standing up. She reached for the ID, plucking it from his grip before he could protest.

“Rebecca Anne is part of this family, Drake,” she said, her tone steely. “It’s long past time you learned how to be a better person. She’s coming home, and you better get used to the idea.”

Drake’s shoulders twitched, his arms ready to throw a punch. His entire body tensed as Susan turned away, setting the ID card neatly on the coffee table. The air between them was charged, like a storm was just waiting to break.

Drake exhaled sharply, his voice low. “You’re not going to want her to come home while I’m here. I’ll make her life hell.”

Susan turned back to him, her gaze cool, her posture unwavering. “It’s already done.”

Drake let out another humorless laugh and ran a hand through his messy hair. His skin felt hot, his thoughts racing, crashing into each other like a car wreck.

“Great,” he muttered, voice dripping with sarcasm. “Just great.”

Susan didn’t flinch. She simply walked toward the kitchen, strolling away as if their conversation had already ended.

Drake stood there, his fists clenched, his breathing primal, as the weight of it all sank in. Rebecca Anne was coming home.



The school bell echoed through the hallways, sharp and piercing, signaling the start of another long, pointless day.

Drake swaggered in, his sister's jogging shoes scuffing against the linoleum floor. Each step felt foreign, unnatural, like his body rejected the clothes he'd been forced into. The too-snug white top clung to him in all the wrong places, the lace at the neckline a constant, irritating presence against his skin. And the jeans — tight, stiff, with those damn embroidered flowers on the pockets — felt like a personal insult every time he moved.

Still, he smirked, pretending he didn't notice the looks.

A few students shot him quick glances as he passed, some whispering, others outright snickering. He caught a guy nudging his friend, both of them stifling laughs behind their hands.

Drake rolled his shoulders, adjusting his backpack with a lazy, unimpressed shrug.

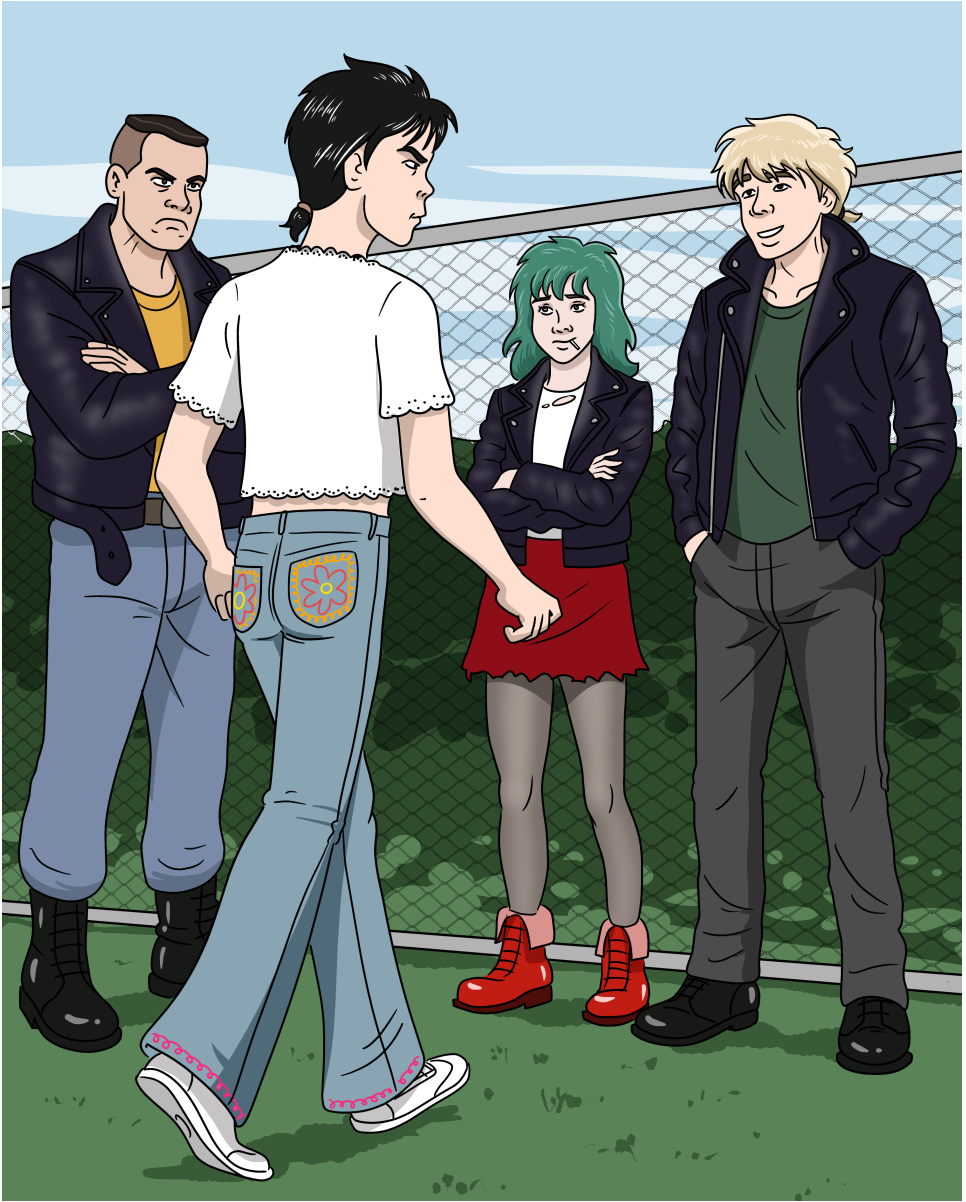
"Idiots," he muttered under his breath.

He could handle it. He'd been dealing with stares and judgment his whole life. This was nothing.

He strode through the hall, moving past rows of dull gray lockers, dodging clusters of students who barely acknowledged his existence. His pace didn't slow until he stepped out into the courtyard, where the usual crew had already gathered in their designated spot — far from the prying eyes of teachers, near the back fence where the school grounds met the overgrown lot next door.

Corey was the first to spot him. "Yo, Drake!" His voice carried across the courtyard, drawing attention from their group. He stood out as always — shaggy hair falling over his eyes, a grin that practically lived on his face. His leather jacket hung loose over a faded band tee, and a cigarette dangled from his fingers.

Next to him, Dylan leaned against the fence, arms crossed, while Rick flicked a lighter absently, the tiny flame dancing before disappearing. Jess, the only girl in their group, sat on the ground with her back against the fence, tying up the laces on her boots.



As soon as Corey took in Drake's outfit, his smirk widened. "What's with this shit?"

Drake rolled his eyes but couldn't help the grin tugging at the corner of his lips. "Man, you should've seen my mom's face last night," he said, dropping his backpack onto the ground. "She was *livid*."

"So she's making you march in the pride parade?" Dylan asked, gesturing to his outfit.

“She’s got all my stuff locked up,” Drake said. “This was all I had to choose from.” He spun around to make it clear that this didn’t bother him. “It’s all the rage in Paris.”

“I can lend you a nice pair of panties,” Jess said with a snicker. “To finish off your ensemble.”

Corey leaned against the fence, arms crossed over his chest, an amused smirk tugging at his lips. Smoke curled from the half-burned cigarette between his fingers, drifting lazily in the crisp morning air. He exhaled slowly, watching Drake with a glint of mischief in his eyes. “I don’t know, man,” he said, tilting his head. “Seems like she’s got you on a tight leash. What’s next? Bedtime stories and a tea party?”

Drake shot him the finger without hesitation.

The group laughed, Corey included. There was no real heat behind their taunts. Just the usual ribbing. Drake smirked, shifting his weight against the fence, still adjusting to the way Rebecca Anne’s damn jeans clung too tight to his crotch. He tugged at the lace on his borrowed shirt, annoyed by the constant reminder of his situation.

Corey clapped a hand on Drake’s shoulder, his grin widening. “You’ll break her eventually. Just keep pushing her buttons. She’ll crack.”

Drake huffed out a laugh, shaking his head. “Damn right she will.”

“Parents always cave in,” Rick chimed in from his spot against the fence, where he was flipping his lighter open and shut, the tiny flame flickering before vanishing. “Mine are always worried they’ll traumatize me if they punish me. Losers.”

Jess snorted. “Yeah, well, your mom still makes you go to church, so who’s really losing?”

Rick shot her a glare but let it go.

Drake rolled his shoulders, feeling the tension ease a little. This — his friends, the easy back-and-forth, the shared amusement — this was where he belonged. Not locked in a house being treated like a damn child.

“She thinks she’s got me under control,” Drake said, shaking his head. “But I’ll show her who’s really in control.”

Dylan, who had been idly kicking a rock across the pavement, suddenly perked up. “Speaking of breaking rules, you’ve heard about Saturday, right?”

Drake arched a brow. “What about it?”

Dylan grinned. “Big party. Chad Wilkes’ place. His parents are out of town all weekend, so it’s gonna be huge.”

Drake let out a low whistle. Chad Wilkes wasn't just some random kid — his parents were loaded, which meant the house was massive, the alcohol was expensive, and the party would be one to remember.

"Yeah?" Drake said, interested.

Corey nodded, smirking. "It's the kind of thing you *don't* want to miss. Booze, weed, no rules."

Rick chuckled. "And let's be real, it ain't a real party unless *you* show up."

Jess elbowed Drake. "They're not wrong. You bring the chaos, Maddox."

Drake grinned, feeling the familiar rush of anticipation. This was exactly what he needed — something to shake things up, to remind everyone, including his mother, that no one controlled him.

"Hell yeah, I'm in," he said, his smirk widening. "Just tell me what time."

The group cheered, the energy in the air shifting, charged with excitement. This weekend was about to get interesting.



Drake trudged up the driveway, his scowl firmly in place. His borrowed shoes — Rebecca Anne's pristine white runners — were scuffed now, dirt clinging to the soles. He kicked at the porch steps before stepping up, watching the dust scatter across the wood.

A day of whispered comments. A day of side-eyes and snickers. His friends had his back, sure, but that didn't stop the idiots in the hallways from running their mouths.

He muttered under his breath as he yanked open the front door, the hinges creaking. The faint scent of something cooking drifted from the kitchen — garlic, maybe onion — something warm, something that, under normal circumstances, might've softened his mood.

But then he heard *her* voice.

"You can't just let him run wild, Susan," came the sharp, clipped tone from the living room. "That boy is trouble. Nothing but trouble."

Drake froze mid-step. His shoulders tensed. His neck suddenly felt stiff. His eyes narrowed. It was the shrill voice of Aunt Diane, his mother's older sister.

He edged forward, peering into the living room. Diane sat stiffly on the floral-print couch, her back straight as a board. Her sharp features were set in a

permanent scowl, lips pursed like she'd just tasted something bitter. She never wore makeup, preferring a hash, threatening appearance over a feminine one.

She was wearing a simple tee shirt — inspired, no doubt by her job as a nurse, so used to wearing bland scrubs most of the time. Her skirt and pumps were a hospital blue, the kind of color you would paint a soviet passenger plane, and they were a token reminder that she was, in fact, female.

Diane always showed up in the summer. Usually just as he was heading out to summer camp, Diane was settling into the guest bedroom. Even if he only had to live with her for a few days every year, it was an excruciating few days. She was bossy, mean, dismissive and fat. When she arrived, he counted the days until he was allowed to go to camp.

The problem was, that this wasn't summer. This was spring. It was months before he even began to dream of freedom from his family and from school. Why was she here now?

Drake barely had time to consider slipping past when her eyes flicked up. "Ears burning, Drake?" she asked dryly.

Drake's body temperature jumped ten degrees.

Susan entered from the kitchen, wiping her hands on a dish towel. "Drake, welcome your Aunt Diane," she said, her tone carrying an edge that he recognized instantly. A warning.

Drake groaned internally but forced a tight, insincere smile. "Hey, Aunt Diane."

Diane gave him a once-over, unimpressed. Her gaze flicked to the lace-trimmed neckline of his shirt, the embroidered pockets of his too-snug jeans. One eyebrow arched in silent judgment before she spoke.

"That's it? No 'how are you, Aunt Diane?' No manners whatsoever?" She turned to Susan with a knowing look. "*This* is exactly what I'm talking about."

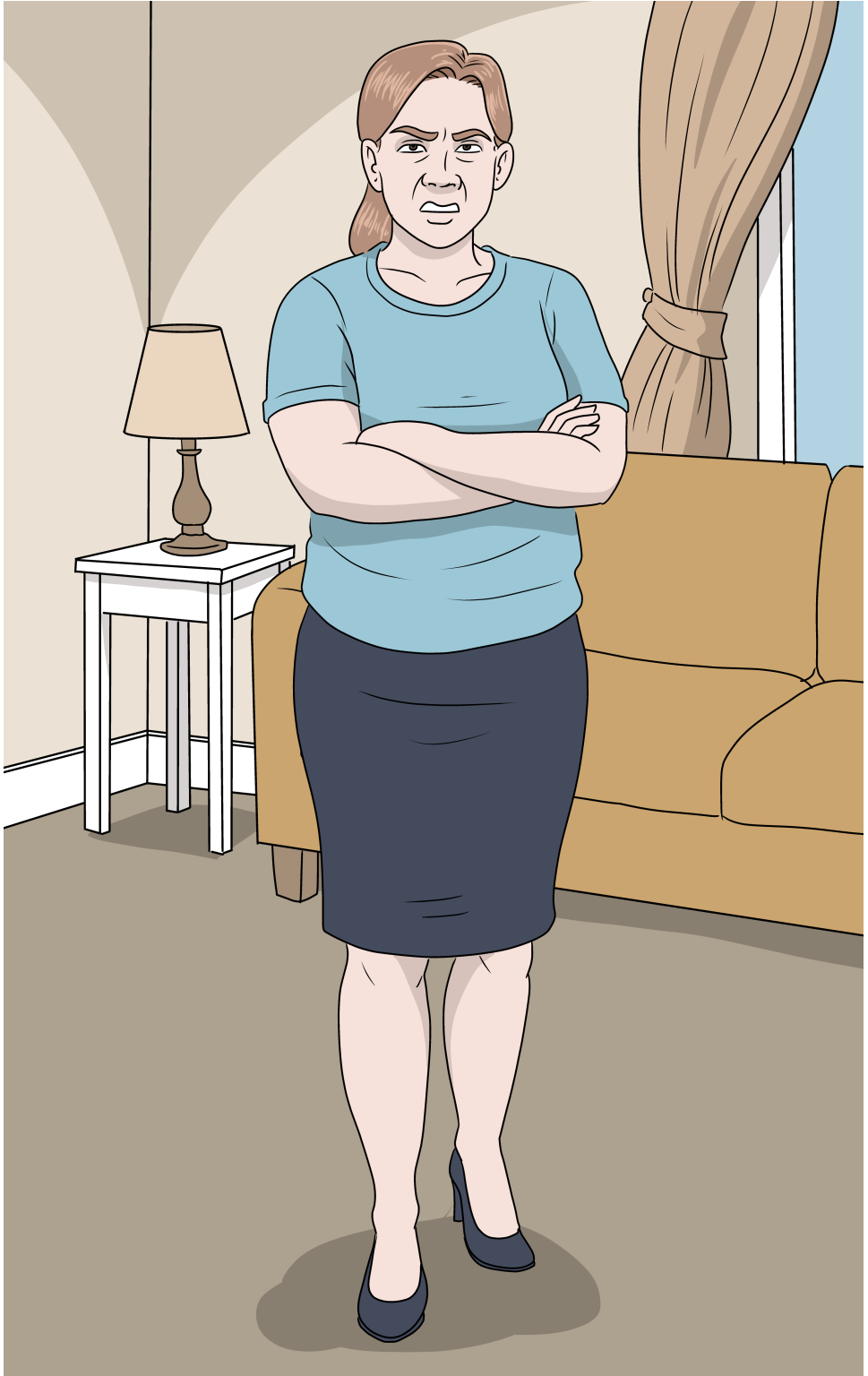
Drake rolled his eyes. "Yeah, well, you're always talking about something, aren't you?"

Susan shot him a look, but Diane was unfazed. If anything, she looked *amused* at his defiance.

"You're proving my point, you know," Diane said, crossing her legs. "Susan, you coddle him. He walks in here with no respect, no sense of responsibility, and you just let it slide?"

Drake scoffed. "Oh yeah, I feel *real* coddled right now."

Diane folded her hands in her lap, her gaze never leaving him. "You think this is a joke, don't you?"



Drake smirked. "You're the joke."

Susan sighed, pressing the towel to her forehead before tossing it over her shoulder. "Diane, please..."

"No, Susan. Someone has to say it." Diane leaned forward slightly, her voice dropping lower. "He's a delinquent. A ticking time bomb. And the more you let him get away with, the worse he's going to be."

Drake felt his blood run even hotter. "Oh, I'm *so* sorry I don't live up to your expectations," he said, his voice dripping with sarcasm. "Must be real disappointing for you."

Diane didn't blink. "Not disappointing. Predictable."

Drake's instinct to launch a haymaker had to be suppressed. If a kind in school said that to him, he'd be lying on the ground, choking up blood. He looked forward to the day when he could punch adults.

Susan stepped between them, rubbing her temples. "That's enough." Her voice was tired, worn. "Diane, he just got home. Can we *not* do this right now?"

Diane leaned back, exhaling sharply. "Fine. But it *is* going to be discussed."

Susan nodded. "Later."

Diane shot Drake one last glance. "Nice blouse."

Drake exhaled slowly, forcing himself to relax. This was *his* house. His mother was already on his case — now *Diane* too? He had to find a way to get out of here.

"It's called fashion, Aunt Diane. You wouldn't get it." His voice was thick with sarcasm.

Susan's glare snapped toward him immediately.

"That's enough," she said, voice tight. "Show some respect."

Diane waved a hand dismissively, still eyeing Drake like he was something unpleasant stuck to the bottom of her shoe.

"I don't expect him to understand respect," she said coolly. "It's clear he hasn't had enough consequences for his behavior."

Drake's jaw clenched, but he bit back the words burning on his tongue. It wasn't worth it. Not with Susan standing there, ready to take her sister's side like she always did. He forced himself to exhale slowly through his nose, rolling his shoulders like he didn't care.

"You always know best, Aunt Diane," he muttered, his voice oozing sarcasm.

Diane's eyes narrowed, her mouth pressing into a thin line.

“You’d better watch that attitude, young man,” she said, her voice hard. “I’m here for a few weeks, and I won’t hesitate to step in if I see you stepping out of line.”

Susan exhaled sharply, pressing a hand to Diane’s shoulder in a clear attempt to smooth the tension. Her voice, though firm, carried a note of exhaustion.

“Diane’s here to relax, Drake. I expect you to behave and treat her well while she’s staying with us.”

“Enjoy your stay,” Drake said through a sneer.

“Go upstairs and get started on your homework,” his mother said. “And don’t forget — you’re grounded, so no sneaking out tonight.”

Drake rolled his eyes, dragging his feet as he turned toward the stairs. “Yeah, yeah.”

He trudged upward, muttering under his breath. “Of course she shows up now. Just what I needed — another warden.”

Halfway up, he paused, glancing back over his shoulder. He tested his door again, just to see. It was still locked up. He reached Rebecca Anne’s room and shoved the door open, stepping into the pink nightmare that still felt like walking into a vagina.

The scent of his sister’s floral perfume still lingered in the air, and the stuffed animals on the neatly made bed seemed to be begging to have their heads ripped off. He yanked his backpack off his shoulder and tossed it onto the bed before flopping down beside it.

He lay there, staring at the ceiling, jaw clenched.

The muffled voices downstairs continued: Susan’s quieter but strained voice, Diane’s sharper, unrelenting chatter.

Drake let out a slow breath through his nose, his hands resting on his stomach as his thoughts churned. They were really trying to get to him.



The night was quiet, the sky stretched dark above the suburban street, interrupted only by the dim glow of streetlights. The Maddox house sat still, the porch light casting long, eerie shadows across the yard. Everything about the scene told Drake he was in the clear.

His sister’s jogging shoes crunched softly against the gravel as he walked up the driveway, hands stuffed into his pockets, a smirk curling at his lips. He’d

stayed out late, done exactly what he wanted, and as far as he could tell, he'd gotten away with it. It turns out that when two sisters are talking endlessly, it's easier to sneak out.

When Drake got to the door, he listened for any activity. The house was silent. No movement inside, no creak of footsteps.

Drake pulled the spare key from his pocket, slipped it into the lock, and twisted slowly. The door opened with barely a whisper. He stepped inside, already imagining the satisfaction of collapsing onto Rebecca Anne's frilly nightmare of a bed. It was ridiculous, but it was soft.

Then the living room light flicked on. Drake squinted against the sudden brightness.

Aunt Diane sat on the couch, arms crossed over her chest, her sharp eyes locking onto him like a predator sighting its prey. She hadn't even moved when the light came on — just sat there, stiff and waiting.

Drake exhaled through his nose, shutting the door behind him with an irritated click.

"Do you even know what time it is?" Diane's voice cut through the silence, each word laced with cold disapproval.

Drake sighed dramatically, running a hand through his messy hair. "You're not my mom."

Diane stood, her posture rigid, her gaze like a blade. "Your mother isn't here right now," she said, her tone hard. "You were grounded. It's nearly three."

The young man shrugged, shifting his weight onto one foot. "Yeah, so?"

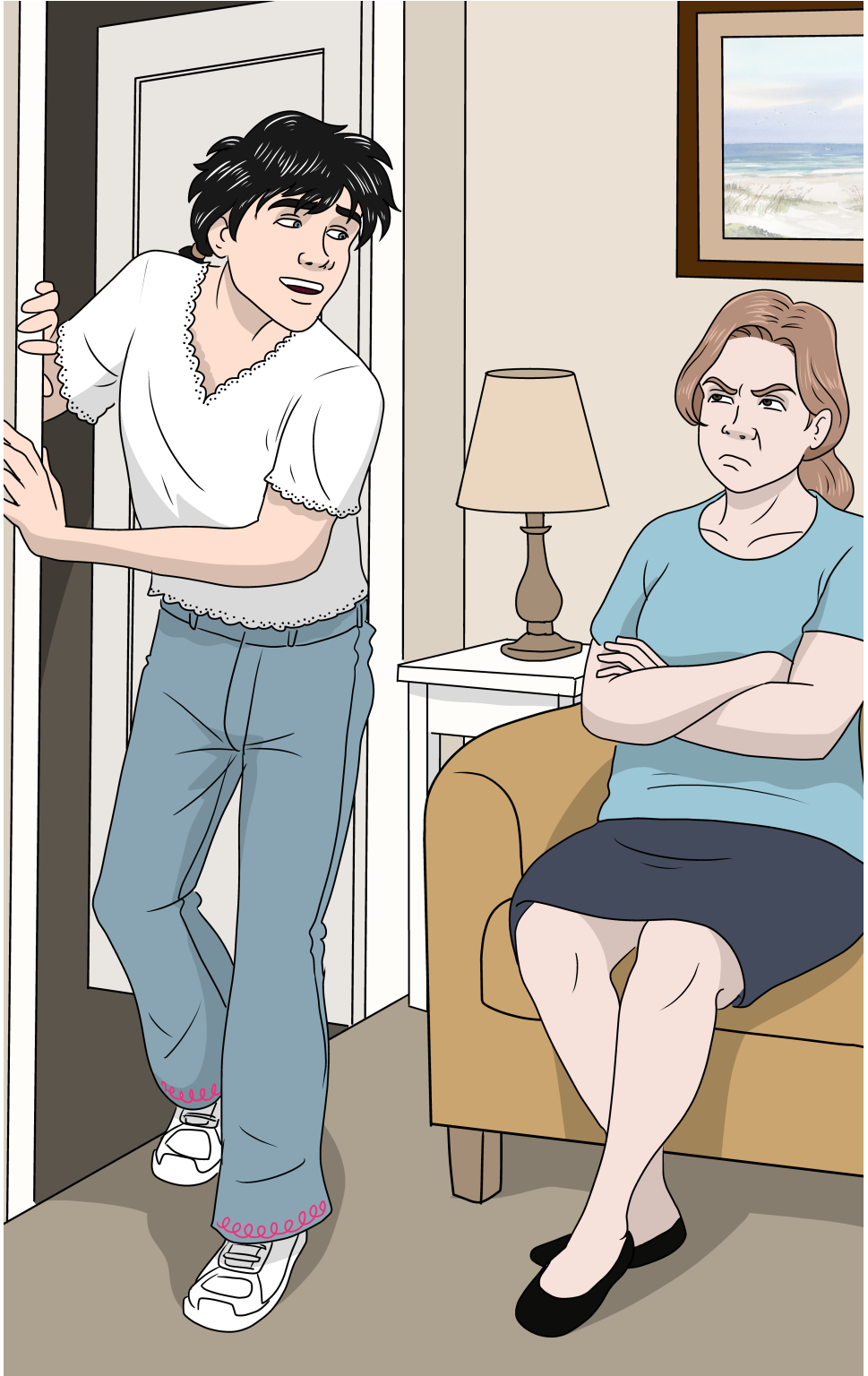
Diane's lips pressed into a thin line. "I told her you'd pull something like this."

Drake rolled his eyes. "Look, I'm tired. Skip the lecture." He turned toward the stairs, already dismissing her.

But then a firm hand closed around his arm. His aunt could move faster than he'd given her credit for. Drake froze mid-step, his body tensing instinctively. Diane wasn't just talking, she was trying to make a point. "Not so fast," she said, voice low, firm. "You're not getting away with this."

Drake turned his head slowly, meeting her gaze. He expected anger, frustration — but what he saw was something worse. A smile.

The unpleasant, middle-aged woman let go of his arm and pointed toward the coffee table. Drake followed the gesture, his eyes landing on a neatly folded piece of fabric sitting atop the table. Pink. Silk. A nightgown.



Drake stared at it, then back at Diane. "Too small for your fat ass," he said, a laugh already bubbling in his throat.

Diane didn't blink. "If you want to act like a child, I'll treat you like one," she said matter-of-factly. "You're going to wear that for the rest of the night and think about how to follow the rules."

The unruly punk's smirk widened before he burst into laughter. A real, unfiltered laugh. "You've lost it, lady," he said between chuckles. "No way."

Diane didn't react. Didn't even flinch. She just stood there, waiting, as his laughter faded. Drake shook his head, his fingers twitching at his sides.

"You really think *you* can make me do this?" he asked, his voice quieter now, edged with something sharper.

Diane tilted her head slightly. "Oh, I don't *think* I can. I *know* I can."

Drake stood his ground, his smirk still lingering. Diane wasn't backing down. He could see it in the way she stood, firm and unwavering, her sharp eyes locked onto him like a predator waiting for its prey to make the wrong move.

Then, without a hint of hesitation, Diane calmly picked up a glass of soda from the coffee table.

"Suit yourself," she said, her voice smooth, almost amused.

Before Drake could react, she tilted the glass forward.

Cold liquid splashed against his chest, seeping into his already snug white T-shirt. The fabric clung to his skin instantly, ice-cold and sticky. The soda dripped down, soaking into Rebecca Anne's borrowed jeans, making the already uncomfortable fit unbearable.

Drake jumped back, sputtering.

"What the *fuck*, Diane?"

She smirked, setting the empty glass down with a soft clink. Then she reached over and picked up the nightgown she had folded earlier, holding it up like an executioner presenting a final offer.

"If you want dry clothes, this is your only option," she said matter-of-factly. "Unless, of course, you'd rather stay wet and sticky all night."

"My sister has a whole closet full of crap that..."

"That I've locked up," Diane said, finishing Drake's sentence.

Drake's jaw tightened. His hands curled into fists at his sides. He glanced down at his drenched clothes, the fabric clinging to him like a second skin, cold and uncomfortable.

Diane raised an eyebrow. "What's it going to be?"

Silence stretched between them.

Finally, with a sharp exhale through his nose, Drake snatched the nightgown from her hand and grit his teeth, stomping toward the bathroom.

Diane didn't say a word, but he could feel the smug satisfaction rolling off her like heat from a fire.

A few minutes later, Drake emerged from the hallway, wearing the nightgown. The pale pink silk brushed against his knees, and the bodice was tighter than anything he was used to. His arms crossed over his chest in irritation, his face flushed with humiliation, though he tried to act like it didn't bother him.

Diane leaned back into the couch, her lips curling into a satisfied smile.

"Happy now, bitch?" Drake muttered, his voice dripping with irritation.

"Very," she said smoothly. "Now, why don't you catch some sleep, princess?"

Drake tensed up, biting back the retort that burned on his tongue. He knew how this game worked — if he snapped, Diane would just use it against him.

Instead, he turned sharply on his heel and stalked toward the stairs. "Fuck you," he muttered under his breath, his words barely audible. Diane didn't stop him.

He stomped up the stairs, each step echoing in the quiet house. By the time he reached Rebecca Anne's room, his jaw ached from how hard he was clenching it. He shoved the door open, stepped inside, and slammed it shut behind him.

The nightgown swayed slightly as he moved, brushing against his skin in a way that made his frustration boil hotter. He threw himself onto the bed, staring up at the ceiling, seething.

Everything about this was ridiculous. The punishment. The feigned anger. Aunt Diane showing up, acting like she was the new sheriff in town. They both knew who he was, and what he was going to do, yet they acted like it was such a shock. Such a surprise. Drake hated it, but he wasn't sure what he could do about it. Lying there, staring at the ceiling, he tapped his fingers against the bed like he might drum up a solution.

He glanced around. The bed looked too neat, tucked tight at the corners. The desk neat and organized. The floor was clean, not a sock or a piece of trash anywhere. Drake blinked, sat up, frowned, and muttered, "Wait a second." He sounded more confused than angry.

He checked the corners, the baseboards, the closet door. He hadn't cleaned the room. He hadn't tried to keep it tidy. He'd done the opposite of cleaning, actually — he'd tried to ignore the place and everything in it. Yet every time

he'd tossed a shirt, or dropped a shoe he must have picked it up right after and put it away.

He ran his hand across the nightstand, letting his fingers pause on a stack of old schoolbooks, Rebecca Anne's name written in neat cursive on the covers. The stack was so even you could've used it as a level.

Drake swallowed and wondered when he started tidying up without noticing.

He wasn't sure what bothered him more — Aunt Diane's punishment or the fact that, somehow, *he'd been keeping Rebecca Anne's room just the way she left it.*

Drake paced, his bare feet pressing into the plush pink carpet, the silk nightgown brushing against his legs with every movement. He ran a hand through his messy hair, his fingers knotting in frustration. Everything in this damn room — from the lace-trimmed pillows to the perfectly arranged stuffed animals — was a reminder that he was being disciplined. No one disciplined Drake Maddox.

He exhaled sharply and stepped toward the vanity. The mirror reflected a version of himself he barely recognized, a scowling figure draped in soft fabric, looking like he'd stumbled into the wrong life. He gritted his teeth and turned away, planting both hands on the vanity table to steady himself.

He saw the bottle of pink nail polish open next to a hairbrush, and the brush still had old blonde hairs stuck in it, probably from when someone cared more about brushing their hair than hiding evidence. The whole place still smelled like nail polish, which, since Drake wasn't into that kind of thing, is a hard smell for him to ignore.

Drake stood there for a moment, knowing something was off. He looked down at his hands. The nails — *his* nails — were painted pink. Not just any pink, either. The same pink as the bottle. Glossy, careful, like someone actually took their time. He turned his hands over, inspecting them like maybe, if he blinked hard enough, the color would be gone. No such luck. He flexed his fingers. The polish didn't budge.

"What the fuhhhh...?" He took a step back. He felt like he was playing a prank on himself, except he'd never sign up for something like this, and if he did, he'd at least have the decency to remember.

He thought about Diane. Diane with her nasty face and her gentle threats, who always acted like a punishment was some kind of life lesson. If this was her idea of character building, she was going above and beyond. He tried to reconstruct the day, wondering if he'd nodded off or if she'd snuck in while he was busy being bored. But he remembered nothing. Unless you count the



vague sense of not knowing what day it was, or the creeping feeling that nothing was quite right.

Then he looked down. Pink toes. He couldn't even work up the energy to swear. He just stared.

He backed away and his foot hit the vanity. The polish bottle rolled around and made a noise, just to remind him it was still there, still part of the joke. He whispered, "This isn't possible. I didn't..." and then stopped, because it didn't matter if it was possible or not. It was done.

He rifled through drawers, hoping for nail polish remover, or even some wipes. There was nothing. He checked the locked closet and ended up on the floor, peering under the bed like maybe the answer would be hiding there. Nothing.

His breath got fast and sharp. He sat there in a silk nightgown — never feeling more wrong — and stared at his hands. There was no way he was going to Diane or Susan for help. He'd sooner wear gloves for the rest of his life. He stood, finally, every movement slow, his arms heavy. The mirror showed him what he already knew: the nails, the nightgown.

He made fists, not that it would help. He wanted to throw something. Instead, he lay back on the bed and stared up, thinking if he waited long enough, maybe this would all make sense, or at least feel less stupid.

Drake told himself it wasn't over. Not by a long shot. Whatever trick had just been pulled on him, he could fight back. He *would* fight back. He was fuckin' *Drake Maddox*.



The morning air was crisp, carrying the faint scent of cut grass and dew. The suburban neighborhood was still, the occasional porch light casting long shadows across empty driveways. It was the perfect time to sneak out.

Drake stood by Rebecca Anne's dresser, his jaw tight. His escape plan was solid — he knew exactly which floorboard wouldn't creak, exactly when Susan and Aunt Diane would be deep enough in sleep not to hear the front door click shut.

But there was a problem: his nails. They were still *pink*.

Drake shook his hands. He had tried everything to get the damn polish off — scrubbing until his skin burned, even trying to scratch it off with the tip of a pen taken from his sister's desk. But the color remained, taunting him.

He exhaled sharply and rifled through Rebecca Anne's dresser, his fingers brushing over neatly folded socks, ribbons, and perfume bottles. Then, near the bottom, he found them — a pair of gloves.

Soft, dainty, pale white with delicate embroidery at the cuffs. The kind of thing Rebecca Anne would've worn to some fancy tea party.

Drake grimaced. *No way*. Then he looked at his nails again.

With a muttered curse, he snatched the gloves and shoved his hands into them.

"This is so fuckin' stupid. So, so stupid," he grumbled under his breath as he flexed his fingers inside the fabric, but at least no one would see.

Moving quickly, he grabbed his hoodie and climbed out the window, landing in the backyard with a soft thud. Within minutes, he was slipping into the shadows, making his way toward the meeting spot.

Corey's car was parked on the far side of an abandoned lot, tucked behind a row of bushes. The headlights were off, the faint glow of a cigarette ember the only sign of life. As Drake approached, Corey grinned from behind the wheel, rolling the window down.

“Took you long enough,” Corey said, flicking the cigarette out onto the pavement. His eyes darted to Drake’s gloved hands. “Dude, what the hell? You going to a fancy ball or something?”

Drake scowled, stuffing his hands into his pockets. “Shut up. Just drive.”

“Why’d you get me up so early?” Corey asked.

“I just needed out of that house,” Drake admitted.

Corey chuckled, but he didn’t push. He reached into the back seat and pulled out a small paper bag, shaking it before tossing it onto Drake’s lap.

“Thought we could make the morning a little more interesting,” Corey said.

Drake peeked inside. It was filled with firecrackers. A slow grin spread across his face.

They peeled out of the lot, the hum of the engine blending into the quiet of the night. They drove aimlessly at first, rolling down streets lined with sleeping houses. Then Corey pulled onto a main road, where a few early-morning joggers and dog walkers wandered the sidewalks.

Corey grabbed a firecracker, lighting it with a flick of his lighter. “Let’s wake ‘em up.”

Drake smirked, rolling down his window. The fuse sparked, sizzling. He tossed it, with the resulting crack echoed against the buildings, and a man jumped, nearly spilling his coffee.

Corey howled with laughter, pounding the steering wheel. “Holy shit, did you see that guy’s face?”

Drake laughed too, his wild side sparking inside him. It was a fun morning. Just the way to start the day.



Drake opened the front door with his shoulder and stepped inside, bathed in the late afternoon light that still filtered through the living room blinds. The house was quiet, but not in the peaceful way — more the way a classroom goes silent right before the teacher asks for homework. He let the door close behind him and paused, waiting for that telltale voice from the stairs or the hallway. Nothing.

He slipped off his shoes and tried to head straight for the stairs, but the smell of coffee and something burnt caught him off guard. He poked his head around the corner and there she was — Diane, standing at the kitchen counter,

hands gripping a mug, her jaw set like she was working on grinding her teeth into dust.

She didn't look up from the mug, but he knew she'd seen him. He thought about trying to walk past her, maybe mumbling something about homework or the library, but she spoke before he could make it two steps into the kitchen.

"You're home early," she said, her tone as flat as the pancakes she tried to make on Sundays. She turned and gave him a look that said she'd rather be doing literally anything else. "I guess it's too much to hope you went to class today?"

Drake leaned against the fridge, doing his best to look casual. "It's not even five yet. You worried I missed the after-school knitting club?"

She ignored the joke. "You know what I'm worried about." She set down the mug with a sharp clack. "You walk in here like you own the place, never a word about where you've been. You just do whatever you want."

Drake shrugged. "I came home for dinner. Want me to leave again?"

She shook her head, looking tired in a way that had nothing to do with sleep. "I want you to try, for once, to act like you're part of this family. That means following the rules, not just showing up when you feel like it."

He tried not to roll his eyes but failed. "What, you want me to wear a suit and tie to dinner too?"

Diane finally looked him up and down, scanning his scuffed jeans and wrinkled shirt. "You know, you could stand to look in the mirror once in a while." She moved to the sink, poured out the last of her coffee, and set the mug down with a little too much force. "Go upstairs. There's something on your bed for you."

Drake hesitated. "What is it?"

She didn't answer. "Just go. And don't slam the door."

He headed for the stairs, feeling her eyes on his back until he was out of sight.

A frilly dress, pastel and lace-trimmed, sat front and center. Next to it, a pair of white tights, matching heels, and accessories — clip-on earrings, a delicate pearl necklace, even a small handbag — were arranged with precision.

Drake stared at the ensemble in absolute disbelief.

"Yeah, fuck you," he said, his voice low.

Diane's expression remained cold, unwavering.

"You're wearing it," she said simply. "And then we're going out to dinner. Maybe a little *public humiliation* will finally teach you to take this seriously."

Drake turned to her, his hands balling into fists. “No. *No way*. I’m not doing this.”

Diane stepped closer, tilting her head. “You have two choices, Drake.”

His muscles tensed. He knew where this was going.

“*Either* you put it on,” Diane continued, her voice dangerously calm, “*or* we call up your mother right now, and you explain why you’ve been sneaking out, lying, and breaking her rules.”

Drake could feel the vein popping on his forehead. His mind raced, trying to find an out, but there wasn’t one. If Susan found out, she’d lock him down even harder. He wouldn’t just be grounded — he’d be locked up, sent away.

Diane saw the hesitation in his eyes and smirked ever so slightly.

“So, what’s it going to be?” she asked. “Take your time.”



The neon sign hummed above the diner, the light flickering just enough to make the parking lot feel half-finished. Drake trailed behind Diane, who moved with the sort of slow, certain pace that always made him feel like he was being set up. The smell of old grease coated the air, heavy and persistent, and there was the expected undercurrent of scorched coffee drifting over from the counter. A guy in a flannel shirt glanced at Drake, sizing him up before deciding his eggs were more interesting. Somewhere over by the jukebox, a laugh escaped, short and sharp, and Drake just looked at the floor like he didn’t notice.

Now inside, the dress — ridiculous and loose — felt wrong against his legs. Every movement seemed too much, like the fabric had its own opinion about how he should behave. He didn’t want to trip, but he didn’t want to look like he cared either, so the result was an awkward shuffle that probably convinced no one.

Diane took the window booth and made a show of arranging her napkin, which she was doing to draw out the moment in silence. Drake hovered for a second, then sat down. The skirt did what skirts do: it bunched up, and before he could stop himself, he smoothed it out and crossed his legs. That startled him. It felt natural, like tying your shoes or scratching an itch.

Diane clocked it right away. “Sit up straight,” she said. “You look like you have a broken spine.”



He didn't answer. He would have liked to say something rude, but he couldn't shake off the way he'd just arranged himself. It wasn't a conscious choice, and that bothered him more than the dress or the shoes or the diner full of people with opinions.

A waitress stopped by. "What can I get y'all?" she said, and looked at Diane, as she was the obvious adult to talk to.

"Black coffee, grilled chicken, vegetables," Diane said.

The waitress turned to Drake.

"Burger. Fries. Coke." He kept his eyes on the table.

The waitress scribbled something, left, and Diane watched him the way a cat watches a mouse that's already in its grip. "You're quiet," she said.

He fiddled with the sugar packets. Then he moved on to the salt and pepper shakers. They sat without talking until the food arrived.

Drake picked up his knife and fork and sliced the burger in half. He put the napkin in his lap. He then took a sip of his soda with his pinky finger raised. He looked at the fork in his hand, then at Diane. He realized he'd been holding it like someone who's taken etiquette lessons. Then he looked at the burger, sliced in half. Who slices a burger in half and eats it with a fork? Only prissy girly-girls like his sister did. So why was *he* doing it?

He dropped the fork like it had burned him and reached for the burger with his hands instead, shoving a bite into his mouth to cover his unease. Diane didn't gloat out loud, but he could feel it coming off her in waves.

They didn't say anything until the check came. Diane tossed down enough bills to cover it and walked out. Drake followed. The air outside was cooler, but it didn't matter.

Diane looked over, stretched a little, and smiled.

"What a perfectly mannered young lady you are, Drake."

He just looked at her and said nothing.



The first thing Drake felt when he woke up was the soreness.

It wasn't the usual stiffness from crashing on a too-soft mattress or the dull ache from a bad sleeping position. This was different. A strange, persistent tenderness right in the center of his chest.

He rubbed the area absentmindedly, wincing slightly at the unexpected sensitivity. His brows furrowed. *What the hell?*

Rebecca Anne's bedspread, all lavender and little flowers, had bunched up around his waist. He'd gotten used to the smell — lavender, laundry soap, something powdery — but not in a good way. It always felt like he was waking up in a hotel room's bridal suite, and he just happened to be stuck there. He rolled out of bed, his feet finding the floor, and stretched. That's when he noticed it again — the tenderness in his chest, like he'd bruised himself without realizing it.

He shuffled to the vanity, the one with all the little bottles lined up and a pink brush sitting beside them. He looked in the mirror and frowned. Something about his reflection looked different, but he couldn't say exactly what. He stood there, staring in confusion, not understanding quite what he was seeing. His chest didn't look like it was supposed to. There was swelling around his nipples — small, but obvious. He touched the spot and winced. It hurt. He stood a little closer, leaning in, pressing with his finger, just to be sure he wasn't making it up.

He said, "What the..." but cut himself off, too confused to finish.

He looked the rest of himself over. His arms looked the same. His stomach, too. Nothing else was fatter or swollen. It was just the chest, and there were no bruises. His mind scrambled for answers, but nothing made sense. Had he gained weight?

Drake spun toward the bathroom, his movements a bit rushed. He yanked open the cabinet above the sink, searching through half-used toiletries and old prescription bottles until his fingers closed around the small container he was looking for: weight-gain pills.

His mother had given them to him for Christmas, after he had begged her for months, convinced he needed to "bulk up" if he was going to keep getting into fights. He hadn't thought much of it at the time. He'd started taking them about six months ago, hoping to add a little muscle.

Drake examined the big black bottle, marked "Max Male" closely.

The label showed a picture of the pills — small, white capsules. But when he opened the container and shook a few into his palm, what he got wasn't little white capsules. They were much larger, a different color, and not capsules, but tablets.

What the hell is this?

His hand tightened around the big bottle as his thoughts spiraled. Had he been taking something *else* this whole time?

He glanced back at the mirror, his chest still bare, the slight swelling looking worse now that he was focusing on it.

A wave of nausea hit him.

He should stop. He should toss the pills, flush them, do *something*.

But then — what if it was nothing?

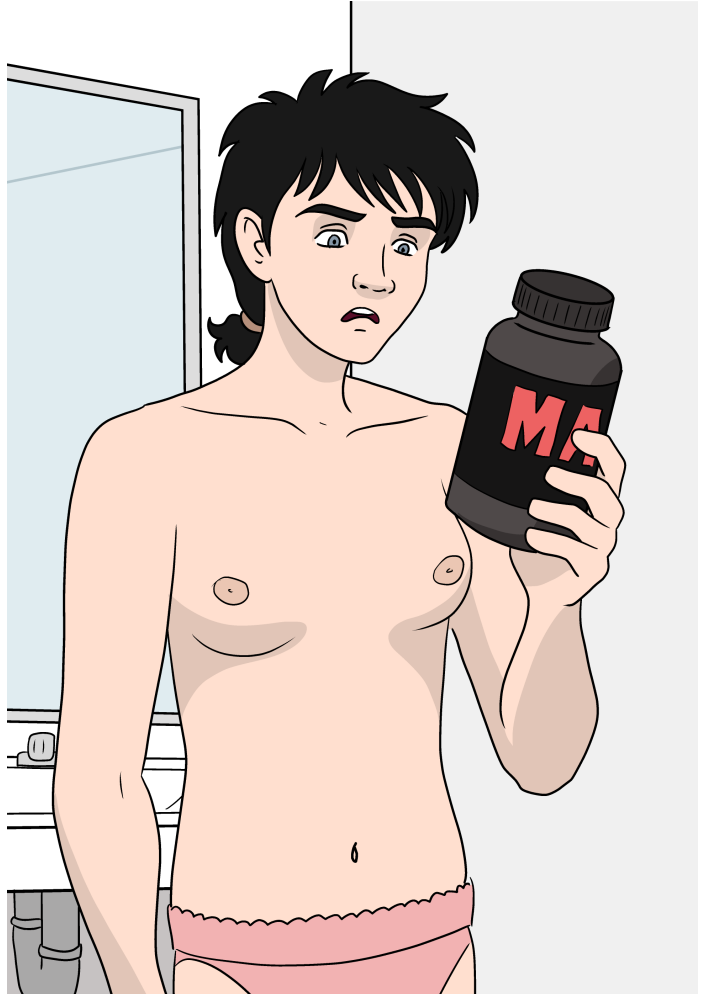
What if it was just a temporary thing? Water retention, maybe. Hormonal fluctuations from stress. That had to be the answer, right?

Drake swallowed hard and set the bottle down on the sink, his fingers flexing against the counter.

He looked at the mirror again. The swelling seemed worse now, though maybe that was just because he was staring at it. He wondered if he should flush the pills. Maybe it was a reaction. No, he'd been taking them for six months without a problem. He considered putting them in the trash, but he set them down on the counter instead.

He said, "It's probably just hayfever or something," even though he wasn't sure who he was talking to. "I'm just gettin' paranoid."

The pills stayed there on the edge of the sink, and he didn't pick them up again until the next morning, where he took two of them like he did every day.



The air conditioning was humming on and off, but other than that, nothing. No noise. No TV. No music. No clinking of dishes. It was a rare moment where his mother and his aunt weren't talking. They talked all day long. Loudly. They laughed like hyenas and got drunker as the evenings went on.

Drake moved carefully, his mind already set on what he needed to do. This wasn't a decision he'd made overnight. He'd planned, waiting for the right moment. It had been four days since his aunt had shown up, and knew something was going to happen. His Aunt Diane had been itching to bring down a hammer on him, and he wasn't going to wait around to see what she had planned.

He wanted out. He needed to get away from Susan's rules and Diane's enforcement. He wanted to do his thing without the sense that someone was always behind him, judging, expecting, correcting. But getting away would require more than just slipping out the door. He needed money, and Susan always kept some cash in her dresser drawer. Not a lot, but enough to get a bus ticket or buy a few meals. He figured he'd be gone before she even noticed.

He pushed Susan's bedroom door open and slipped inside. Drake crossed the room and went straight for the dresser. Opening the top drawer, he found socks and a few tangled necklaces, and right under them, the envelope of cash he remembered was there. Money his mother kept hidden — or so she thought. He pulled out five twenties and put them in his pocket. He thought about taking more, but that would be too obvious.

Then a voice behind him cut through the silence. "What do you think you're doing?"

Drake didn't have to turn around to know it was Diane. He did anyway, moving slow, hoping for a way out that wasn't there. She stood in the doorway with her arms folded. Her look didn't say much, but it didn't have to.

"None of your business."

"Save it," she said. "Empty your pockets."

He hesitated, which was a mistake. Diane moved closer, not in a hurry, but with a certainty that made arguing pointless.

"Now."

Drake pulled the twenties out and dropped them back on the dresser.

"Unbelievable," Diane said. She looked at the cash, then at Drake. She didn't go off on a rant. She didn't raise her voice. She just turned.

"Downstairs. Now."

Drake gave a short, annoyed laugh. "Seriously? You think you can push me around?"

Diane didn't answer, and that was worse than any lecture.

He followed her down the stairs, not bothering to hide his irritation. Susan was in the kitchen stirring a pot, and the smell of garlic filled the house. She turned, her face hopeful for a second until she saw Drake behind Diane.

Diane didn't waste time. "I just caught him stealing from your dresser."

Susan's eyes changed in an instant. She set the spoon down. "Drake," she said, almost tired, like she'd said it a hundred times.

Drake shrugged. "It was just a couple of twenties."

"A couple?" Diane said. "Five. He was sneaking around, stealing from his own mother."

Susan rubbed her forehead. "I don't even know what to say to you anymore, Drake."

"Then don't say anything."

Diane stepped forward, keeping her tone calm. "If you won't listen, then maybe it's time for consequences that actually mean something."

Susan looked at Diane, uncertain. "What are you suggesting?"

Diane didn't hesitate. "He can't be trusted to make his own choices, so let's make them for him." She turned to Drake. "Since you don't seem to respect your mother, maybe it's time you learn what it means to follow rules. From now on, whenever you're home, you'll wear Rebecca Anne's clothes."

Drake tried to laugh it off, but no sound came. "What?" He looked to his mother. Susan didn't come to his defense.

Diane went on. "Every moment you're in this house, you'll be dressed properly. Maybe that will teach you some respect."

He wanted to shout. "You can't do this! I'm not some dress-up doll!"

Diane watched him. "Then you shouldn't have acted like a thief."

He waited for Susan to tell Diane she was being unfair, but she just let out a long sigh.

"I don't like this," Susan said. "But Diane has a point. You've crossed the line too many times, Drake. I don't know what else to do with you."

Diane said, "We'll start tomorrow."

Drake walked upstairs and closed the door behind him, not waiting to hear anything else.



Alone in Rebecca Anne's room, Drake paced, his thoughts racing.

He *hated* Diane.

He hated how she always got her way, how she manipulated his mother into agreeing with her. He hated how she walked into their house and acted like she was the only one who knew what was best.

He needed something — *anything* — to use against her. Drake grabbed his phone, opened a browser, and typed in her full name. The search results were disappointingly bland. A few work profiles, some old community posts. No scandals, no dirt.

But then something caught his eye. A link led to a staff page for the medical office where she worked. He clicked it, scanning the details.

Diane wasn't just a nurse, she worked for a hypnotherapist. Drake frowned, staring at the screen.

Why had no one ever mentioned that before?



Drake had stormed around the house, slamming doors, yanking at the frilly fabric Diane had forced him into, his face burning with humiliation. He had shouted, argued, even threatened to leave, but Diane hadn't budged.

His mother Susan barely looked at him.

"It's only while you're in the house," she had said, her voice carrying that same weary disappointment. "It's for your own good, Drake."

And Diane? She just stood there, watching, waiting for him to fight back.

That had been a week ago. Now, Drake sat stiffly at the dinner table, the soft fabric of a pale blue blouse pressing against his skin, a skirt brushing against his knees. Diane sat across from him, sipping tea like this was all perfectly normal.

Drake had stopped fighting in the loud, obvious ways, but inside, his frustration was boiling over. Every morning, he was expected to change into the clothes Diane picked out. Skirts, blouses, sometimes even dresses. She supervised closely, making sure he complied.

At first, he had worn them wrong on purpose — left buttons undone, skirts wrinkled, ribbons crooked — just to get a reaction. But Diane never gave him the satisfaction. She simply corrected him, adjusting the hem of a dress here, fixing his hair there, treating him like some kind of project.

The worst part was that something strange was happening to him. He noticed it in small ways at first, like the way his footsteps sounded lighter on the hardwood floors. The way his posture had shifted without him realizing, his spine straighter, his shoulders pinned back.

Then there was his voice. He'd snapped at Diane the other night, telling her to back off, but the words had come out softer than he'd intended. Like he was trying to be polite about it.

Later, he sat in front of Rebecca Anne's vanity, staring at himself. The room was dimly lit, just the glow of the lamp casting a golden sheen across the mirror.

It looked... Well, it looked gay. As he reached up to scratch his head, he saw his painted nails. The slight swelling in his chest that hadn't gone away. He could see it through the blouse he was wearing. This was getting out of hand.



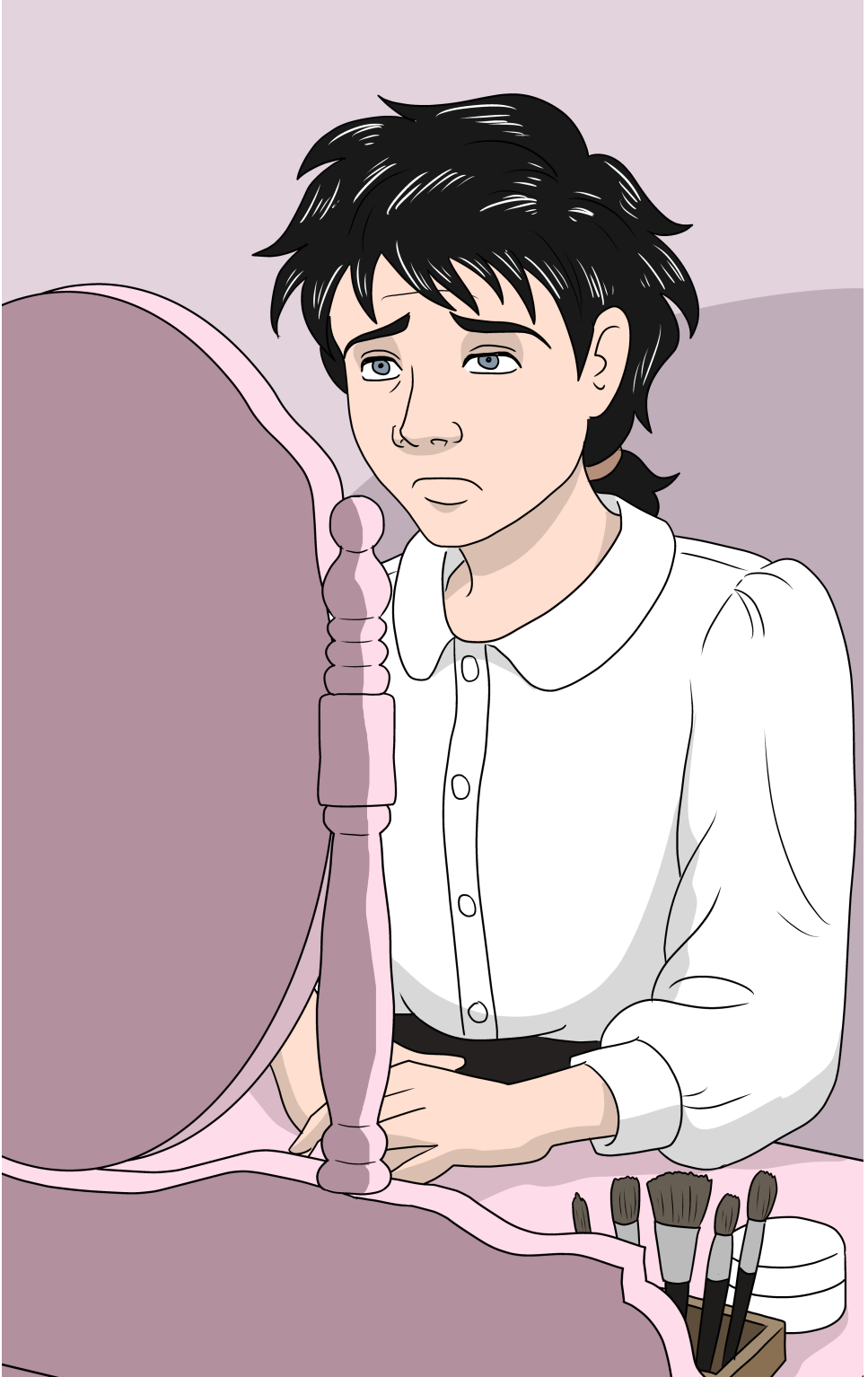
That night, Drake sat by the window in Rebecca Anne's room, his arms resting on the sill, his gaze fixed on the dimly lit street outside. His mind had been running in circles all evening, frustration simmering beneath the surface. He needed to get into his room — needed to grab his stash of money, his personal things, anything of value that was his and get out of town.

Checking his door a few times a day hadn't yielded any changes. His room was locked up and that lock on the handle was un-pickable. He steeled his eyes, his fingers drumming against the wood. There had to be a way.

A sharp whistle sliced through the silence. Drake looked up. His head snapped toward the backyard, and there, standing in the shadows near the fence, was Corey. He waved, smirking.

Drake exhaled, his pulse kicking up a notch. He could always count on Corey. He checked the hallway. It was silent, with no sign of movement.

Quickly, he dumped the skirt he was wearing and got into some sweatpants Rebecca Anne had hidden in her upper shelf, and a weird wrap-style top that was the closest thing to a T-shirt he could find. Fortunately, Corey couldn't have seen the skirt Drake had been wearing from where he was. He grabbed



his sister's sneakers from beside the bed and slipped them on. He eased the bedroom door open and stepped into the darkened hall. He moved carefully, holding his breath as he crept toward the back door.

Outside, the night air was crisp, carrying the faint scent of cut grass and distant smoke from someone's fire pit.

Corey was already moving toward him, carrying a folded ladder under one arm.

"You got the ladder?" Drake whispered.

Corey nodded, his grin widening. "Man, I can't believe you're still letting them lock you out of your own room. This better be worth it."

Drake shot him a glare but didn't argue. He took one end of the ladder, and together, they carried it to the side of the house, moving quickly but quietly. The metal was cold under Drake's fingers, and every little clink of the ladder sent a fresh jolt of paranoia through him. If Diane or Susan woke up, he was going to have to figure out some whole new way to bullshit them.

They reached his bedroom window. Corey set the ladder against the siding and gave it a quick shake to make sure it was stable.

Drake didn't hesitate, climbing fast, his breath coming in short, controlled exhales. His heart pounded against his ribs, a mix of adrenaline and urgency. The ladder wobbled slightly, but he ignored it, focusing only on the window above.

When he reached the top, he carefully slid the window open. The hinges let out a faint squeak, and he froze, holding his breath.

Nothing. No response. The house remained silent.

Now he could get his stuff and get the hell out of this conspiracy. With a glance down at Corey, who gave him a thumbs-up, Drake swung his legs inside and landed softly on the carpet, his sister's shoes hitting the floor with a muted thud.

He kept crouching low for a second, listening. The house remained still. No movement, no shifting floorboards, no telltale sign that Diane or Susan had stirred.

He straightened, exhaling slowly, then turned toward his room — except, it wasn't his room.

The walls were bare.

His posters: *gone*.

His shelves, the ones he had crammed with random junk: *gone*.

His bed: *gone*.

Even his old, scratched-up dresser, the one he had stuffed full of clothes, loose change, and half-forgotten snacks: *gone*.

Drake, for a rare moment in his life, was at a loss. He turned in slow circles, his mind struggling to process what he was seeing — or rather, what he wasn't seeing.

“What... the... fuck...?” he muttered under his breath.

The room felt hollow, like it had been erased. Like he had never even *lived* here. His pulse quickened as he strode toward the closet, easing the doors open. Nothing. No hangers, no clothes, not even a stray sock left behind. Just an empty, yawning space.

He spun toward the corner where his bed used to be. A small indent remained in the carpet, the only evidence that anything had ever been there.

“No way.”

The whisper barely left his lips before a voice cut through the silence.

“What’s taking so long, man?” Corey called from the window. Drake turned sharply. Corey had climbed halfway up the ladder, his head poking into the window, his expression expectant. “Grab your stuff and let’s go,” Corey urged.

Drake’s throat felt dry. His hands clenched at his sides as he forced himself to speak. “It’s gone.”

Corey frowned. “What?”

Drake swallowed hard. “Everything. My clothes, my posters — *everything*.”

Corey’s eyes darted around the empty room, his brows furrowing. “Dude, what do you mean, gone? Your mom cleared it out or something?”

Drake exhaled sharply through his nose. His jaw tensed. “I don’t know.”

His voice was tighter than he wanted it to be.

Corey climbed in fully now, his sneakers scraping against the windowsill as he swung his leg over. He stood beside Drake, scanning the space with disbelief.

“This is seriously fucked up,” Corey muttered. “Like, *insane* levels of fucked up.”

Drake barely heard him. His mind was still racing. Where was his stuff?

And more importantly — *what were his mother and aunt trying to do?*

Drake’s breath came fast and sharp, his chest rising and falling in erratic bursts as the reality of his empty room sank in. His fingers twitched at his sides, his entire body vibrating with uncontained fury.

Without a word, he turned on his heel and stormed toward the door, shoving past Corey, who barely had time to move out of the way.

“Drake...” Corey started, but Drake didn’t stop.

With a mighty kick, Drake slammed his foot into the door and it flew open, shredding the doorframe to splinters. He had been through enough.

He stomped down the hall, then down the stairs, every step heavy with anger. The house was dimly lit, the glow from a single lamp casting long shadows against the walls. The smell of chamomile tea drifted through the air, warm and calm.

Drake rounded the corner into the living room, to find Susan and Diane on the couch, teacups in hand, chatting quietly. The scene was so normal, so *casual*, that it made his blood boil.

His voice cut through the peace like a knife. “Where’s my stuff?”

Both women look slightly startled. Susan nearly spilled a drop of her tea. She set her teacup down carefully, her eyes flicking to Diane.

Diane, however, didn’t flinch. Instead, she stood, her expression darkening. “Did you get into your room?” she demanded, her voice sharp, accusing. “I wondered what that noise was.”

“You were strictly forbidden from going in there, Drake,” Susan said, calmly.

Drake ground his teeth. He didn’t answer.

Susan sighed, rubbing her temples like she already had a headache. “Everyone calm down.” She spoke slowly, deliberately. “Your things have been moved.”

Drake’s jaw dropped. His hands balled into fists. “*Moved?*” His voice rose. “You *emptied* my entire room! Where the hell is my stuff?”

Diane leaned back against the armrest of the couch, her lips curving into something smug. “You don’t need it anymore,” she said simply. “You’ve been doing just fine with Rebecca Anne’s things.”

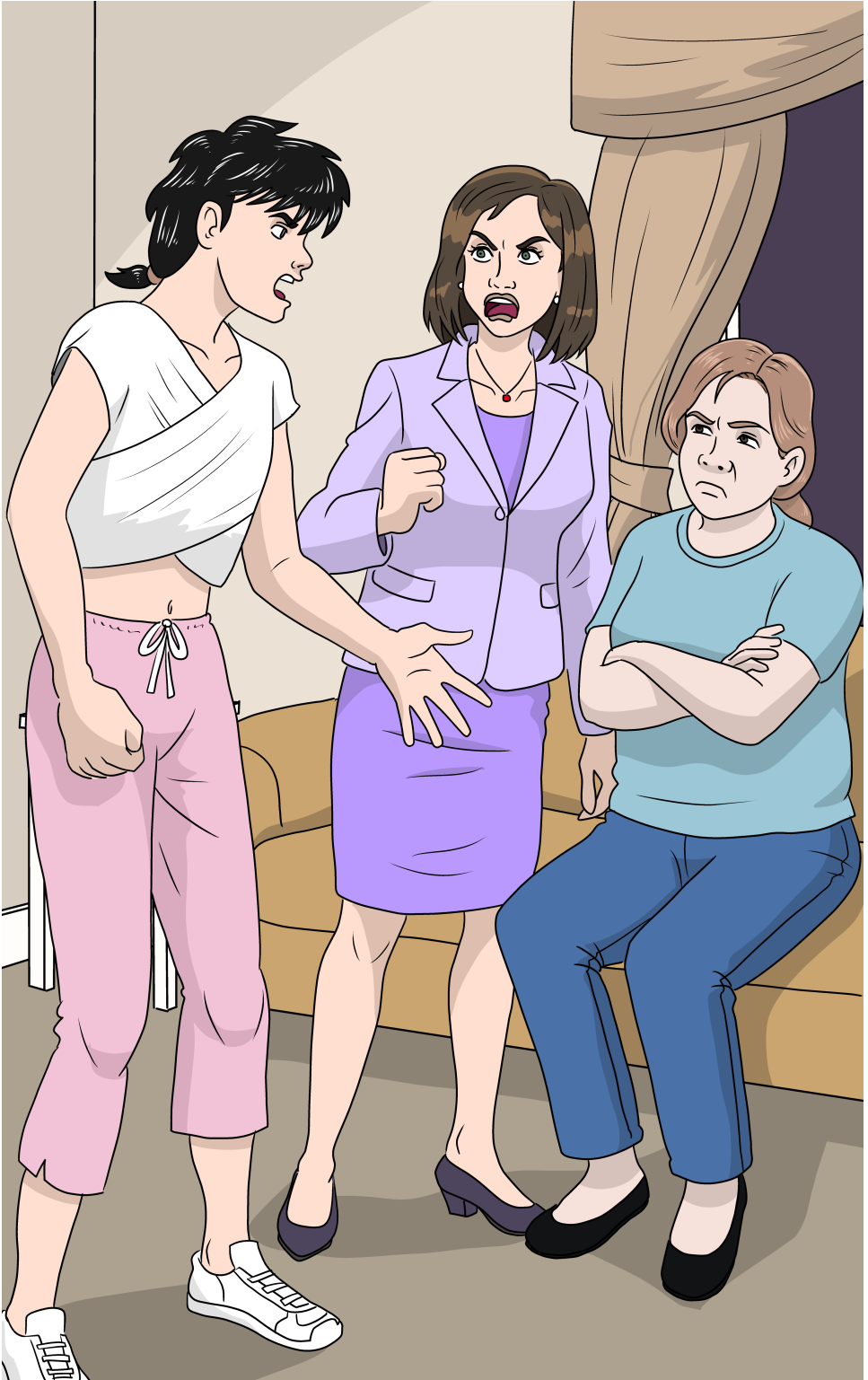
“Diane knew you’d try to break in,” Susan said. “So she and I had your things moved out so you couldn’t get them back.”

“This is *insane!*” he shouted. His face was burning, his pulse roaring in his ears. “You had no right...”

Susan’s voice cut through his. “Go back to Rebecca Anne’s room, Drake.”

The quiet authority in her tone made Drake’s blood boil.

“And lower your voice before you wake the neighbors,” she added, her tone sharp.



Drake's breathing came hard and fast. He looked between them, searching for something — some crack in their resolve, some sign that Susan would *fix* this, that she'd stop Diane.

But there was nothing. Just quiet, unwavering expectation, like this was normal. Like *he* was the one being unreasonable.

Drake started to breathe in big lungfuls of air, like the kinds of breaths a bull takes before charging. What could he really, do, though? He wasn't about to hit his own mother. Oh, he was ready to land a punch right in Diane's face, but not in front of his mom.

Without another word, he and stomped back upstairs, slamming the door to Rebecca Anne's room behind him so hard the walls shook.

Outside, Corey let out a frustrated breath, tossing the ladder into the grass. He figured whatever was going down didn't involve him anymore, even if his so-called best friend didn't say anything and left him to scramble out the window. "Unbelievable," he muttered, shaking his head. He turned away and took off.



Drake paced the length of Rebecca Anne's room, tense, restless. The pink carpet muffled the sound of his footsteps, but it did nothing to soften the frustration swirling and bubbling beneath his skin. His ears rang from how much blood was rushing through his head, his hands flexing and tightening into fists at his sides.

This was *insane*.

Everything about this situation — his room being wiped from existence, Diane's smug expression, his mother acting like this was *normal* — it was all completely insane.

His things were *gone*. Not packed away, not shoved in storage, just *gone*. Like he had never lived in that room at all.

He exhaled sharply, raking his fingers through his hair. This wasn't just punishment anymore. This was something more like revenge.

His mother, even at her most disappointed, had never pulled something like this. Susan was always trying to get him to be *better*, to act more like the son she wanted. But this? This felt like something more than just control. This had to be Diane's doing.

Drake turned sharply, his gaze landing on the vanity mirror. The reflection staring back at him didn't look right. The clothes his mother had him wearing were ridiculous. His longish hair was straighter and less unruly. He decided to tie it to look less strange. He noticed his painted nails as he tied the hair back.

His hands curled around the vanity edge, knuckles going white. He had to get out. He had to stop this. His eyes darted around the room, desperate for something — *anything* — that might help him. That was when he saw it.

It sat on the shelf, the pink cover covered in glittery stickers, the words "Rebecca Anne's Memories" written neatly in black marker. Drake picked up the scrapbook and turned it over in his hands. The stickers stuck up under his fingers. He opened it.

He expected a parade of first-day-of-school snapshots, awkward class pictures, and maybe the odd science fair disaster. But when he opened it, what he found was something else entirely. Every page glowed with sunlight — outdoor photos, warm afternoons, and scenes that felt more like a catalog for perfect summers than the rough-and-tumble family memories he'd seen in other albums.

The first photo showed Rebecca Anne on a rickety wooden dock, feet dangling above the water, the lake behind her glassy and still. She wore a sundress covered in daisies and a straw hat with a pink ribbon. "First day at the lake," the caption read, with a sun sticker in the corner.

He turned the page. Rebecca Anne sat cross-legged in the grass, a woven basket overflowing with wild strawberries in her lap. There was a smudge of berry juice on her cheek, a faint smile on her lips. "Strawberry picking with Mom," the note said, along with two carefully drawn little strawberries in the margin.

He found a picture of her seated on the grass, half-shaded by a willow tree, a paperback open on her lap. "Reading by the river — finished four books this week." A tiny blue dragonfly sticker hovered in the page margin.

There were snapshots of her paddling a canoe in a yellow life vest, standing on a picnic blanket surrounded by bowls of fruit, and picking wildflowers with her arms full of color. He saw Rebecca Anne painting watercolors at a folding table in the shade, the caption reading, "Trying to capture the sunset."

Another page showed her beside a roaring campfire, toasting a marshmallow until it was golden brown. "S'mores champion!" she'd written, a small drawing of a gooey marshmallow stick beside the caption.

It went on like that: running through a sprinkler, biking down a gravel road, eating melting popsicles on the porch steps, and wading in the creek with her

skirt hitched up. “Summer mischief,” she called it, with a doodle of two bare feet in the mud.

He kept turning pages, expecting to stumble across a birthday party or a school play, but each new photo glowed with summer. Rebecca Anne always wore shorts, skirts, sundresses, or swimsuits — never a uniform, never standing in front of a school, never caught in a classroom. No backpacks, no school bus, no autumn leaves or winter snow — just sunlight, grass stains, freckles, and open sky.

The timeline nagged at him. Only three of years were in the book — last summer, the one before, and the one before that. Nothing further back. No Halloween costumes with crooked masks, no missing front teeth, no early morning bedhead on Christmas morning. Every photo was outdoors, always in summer, always looking just right. He looked on the shelf for another book, but there was none.

“Where are the stupid baby pictures?” he muttered. “The dumb princess birthday parties?” He turned the page, expecting to see the usual baby and pre-teen shots. There were none. No toddlers smearing frosting. No first-day-of-school snapshots with backpacks bigger than heads. All the pictures started with Rebecca Anne as a teenager, dressed up and posed, not a hair out of place.

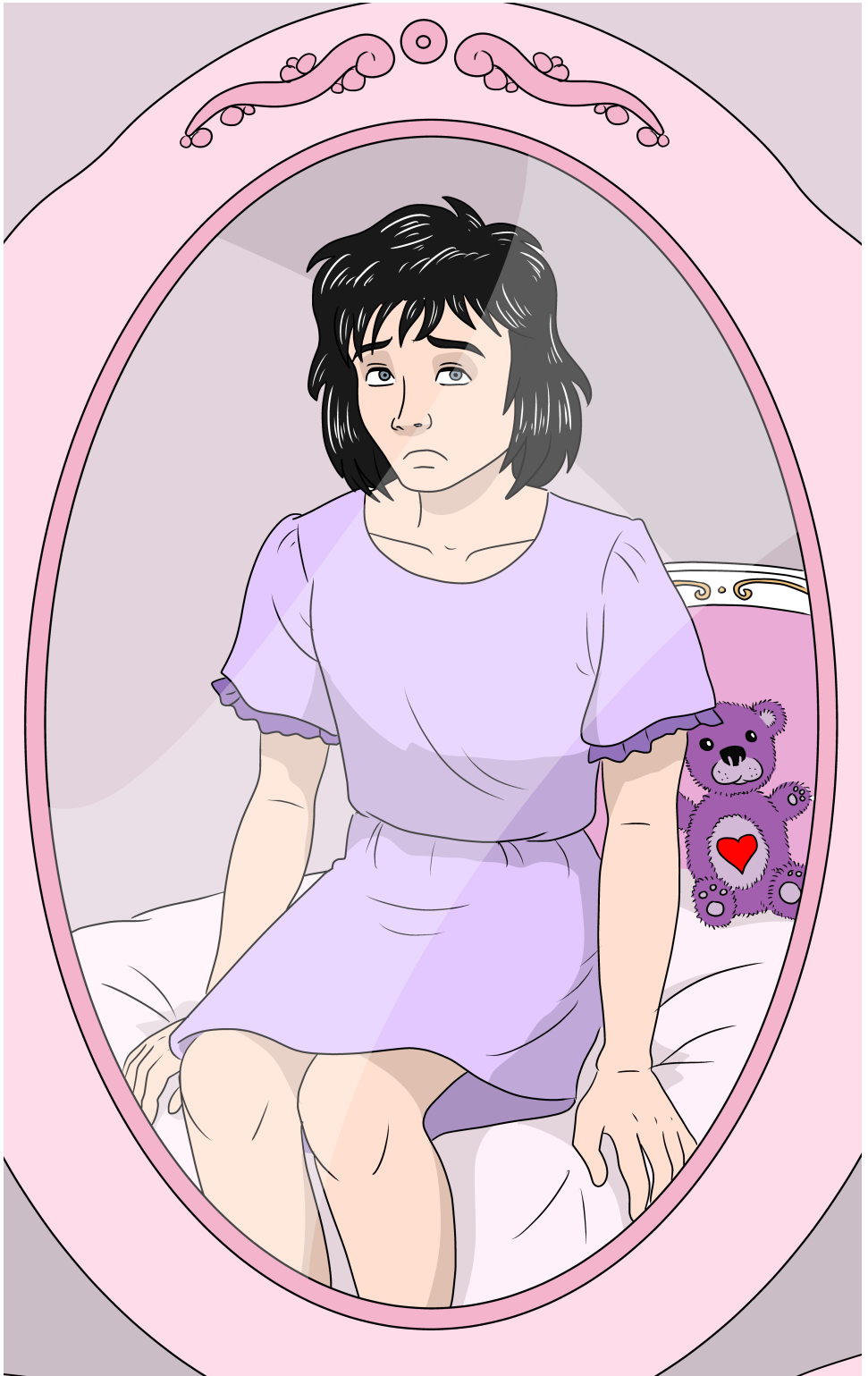
Drake flipped through, pausing when he reached a photo of Rebecca Anne in ballet shoes beside a studio mirror. “First recital — so nervous but so excited!” the caption read. He stared at it. His hand slid along the edge of the photo. Suddenly, it was like his brain jumped a groove — he could remember the feel of slippery satin ribbon wrapped around ankles, the pinch of ballet slippers, the reflections of the studio mirrors. He pulled his hand back.

“No,” he said.

He wasn't sure what made him keep going. He turned the page and saw Rebecca Anne by a window, a thick paperback splayed across her lap. The caption was something about rainy afternoons and happy endings. Drake stared at the photo, and, for a second, he swore he could remember turning pages, feeling the weight of the book. Sunlight on bare arms. Not just a picture, but the feel of the afternoon itself. His mouth went dry. He pushed the book away from him and pressed the heels of his hands into his eyes.

“No,” he said again, his voice louder, flatter, like it might drown out whatever was sneaking up on him.

He stared straight ahead, hoping his pulse would slow down, wishing for the room to settle. It didn't. He leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees, and tried to force his thoughts into order, but the images stuck around. It felt



like everything he knew was getting rearranged by someone with a bad sense of humor.

Drake looked up at the mirror on the vanity. The lavender colored dress, the polished fingernails, the long hair. He reached up and undid the small tie. His hair fell straight, making him look at his reflection like he had seen a ghost.



The next morning, Drake walked downstairs. He moved like he hadn't slept much, which was true. He had spent the night staring at the ceiling, returning to those odd images from the scrapbook. He'd seen ballet slippers and summer afternoons he could not remember living, and his brain seemed to be rearranging the furniture of his memory without asking permission. The air downstairs smelled like coffee, just a little burnt. Diane sat at the dining table. She wore her hair pinned back and held her mug as if it were glued to her hand. She looked up.

"Drake," she said, not exactly cold or warm, just using his name like she was making sure it hadn't changed overnight.

He didn't say much, just a noise. He shuffled over to the kitchen, thinking about coffee and how maybe a jolt of caffeine would make him feel like a person again.

Before he reached the pot, Diane called out. "Come here. I need you to fix my hair."

He moved over to her without a word. She handed him the brush and a few pins, and he took them, standing behind her chair. He didn't plan anything or think about what came next. His hands just started working. He brushed out the sections, twisted them, pinned them up. The movements came one after the other, each step following the last, simple as breathing or tying shoelaces. He finished, set down the brush, and stepped back.

Diane checked her reflection in the small mirror near the fruit bowl. "Perfect," she said, sounding like she'd expected nothing less.

Drake took a step back, his hands feeling foreign, disconnected from the rest of him. His stomach lurched. "How... *how*?" Diane looked at him through the mirror, her expression unreadable.

"Thank you, Drake," she said simply. "You're so good with hair." Drake swallowed hard, his mind reeling. He didn't respond. Instead, he turned and walked back toward Rebecca Anne's room, his hands flexing, his fingers



tingling.

Drake stared at his hands. He flexed his fingers once, then turned and walked away. He didn't say anything as he went back toward Rebecca Anne's room, just to hide. The feeling that something was completely broken in his life followed him all the way up the stairs.



Monday moved at the pace of drying paint, which was fitting, since Drake spent the whole day trying to blend into the walls. School felt like a carnival funhouse, only the mirrors all showed him in today's ridiculous outfit, and everyone had tickets to the show. He was wearing a tight athletic outfit that didn't have any frills or embellishment, but was quite pink. It was a compromise. Frills, lace, ribbons and bows were on just about everything in Rebecca Anne's closet. The plain cut of the top was welcome, the color was not. Neither was the matching pair of pink pants he wore, chosen for very similar reasons. The now-scuffed white running shoes were the only thing that wasn't explicitly female. Every time he ducked his head or tried to walk faster, some genius would toss out a comment: "Nice outfit, princess," or "Did your mommy pick that out for you?" It was like being pecked by ducks, and ignoring them took every bit of focus he had.

Where were his so-called friends? Laughing. Oh, they didn't let him see them laugh, but he knew they were, wherever they were hiding. He kept his hands by his side, hunched his shoulders, and pushed through the halls, counting down the seconds to the bell. The freedom promised by the end of the day turned out to be another letdown — none of it really washed off, it just followed him home and settled somewhere deep, like dust that couldn't be swept away.

By the time Drake stepped inside his house, he didn't feel angry. Tired was the only thing left. Diane waited in the living room, like some prison guard with a fresh uniform, holding out a white dress with ruffles and lace at the collar and a pair of tights that looked like they'd come from a ballet recital. Drake thought about arguing, but the conversation had already happened too many times and ended the same way. Diane never cared. Susan, flipping through her phone or sorting the mail, didn't say a word.

This was his life now.





Drake ran across the yard in the darkness, not thinking about the dress or the cold, just wanting to get away from the lights in the house, the eyes that always seemed to watch him.

Corey stood in the shadows by his car, pitching pebbles into the grass, looking like someone who'd been waiting a while and knew he was about to see something strange. When he spotted Drake, he whistled and grinned. "Man, they really have your ball cut off," Corey said. "You look like you're on your way to a tea party."

Drake yanked out the ribbon Diane had tied in his hair and scowled. "Shut up, Corey. This isn't funny. I need to get out of here. Something's seriously fucked up."

The grin faded from Corey's face, and he stopped with the jokes. He watched Drake for a second, as if waiting for a punchline, then shrugged and shifted his weight. "Alright, spill. What's going on?"

Drake checked the yard, still half-expecting Diane or Susan to materialize and haul him back inside. He pulled off a pair of gloves and held out his hands. "Look at this. They've been painting my nails when I'm not even awake or something."

Corey stepped closer, squinting in the dim light. He turned Drake's hand over and let out a short laugh. "Dude, your nails are fine." He stepped back and crossed his arms. "There's nothing there."

Drake stared at his own hands, turning them palm up, then palm down. He couldn't see any pink, no shine, nothing except the same hands he'd always had. "But... They were pink. I saw them. Earlier today..."

Corey shook his head. "Look, man, maybe you're just imagining things. You've been stuck in that house with your mom and aunt. That's enough to make anyone lose it."

"They're trying to screw with my mind or something!" Drake barked. "They want me to get all messed up in the head! They want me to think I'm turning into a girl or something!"

Drake took a step back and looked at the ground, then up again. "It's not just my nails. My chest, my voice... Stuff is happening, Corey. I can't stay there." He held out his arms. "I mean, just look at me!"

Corey looked at him for a long moment, the smirk gone. "Okay, let's say something weird is going on. What's your plan?" He waited, but Drake didn't answer. "You don't have money. You don't have clothes. Where are you going to go? Sleep in the car? Crash on a park bench?"

Drake shook his head. "I don't care. I'll sleep anywhere. I just need to leave."

Corey ran a hand through his hair and sighed. "We can't just run without a plan. Give me a few days. I can find some cash, and we'll figure out where to go."

Drake looked at him, not sure if he wanted to laugh or scream. "Fine. But don't take too long. I can't stand it in there anymore."

Corey gave a crooked grin, back to his old self for a second. "Don't worry. I don't know what's going on, but I've got your back."



Drake moved through the kitchen, careful not to make a sound. He knew where every shelf was, how far he could open the fridge before the light spilled out, and how to close it quietly with his hip. He worked in slow motion, loading his backpack with food he could eat on the move — granola bars, peanut butter, apples, bread, and whatever he could wrap up without making a mess. He set a few string cheeses on the counter and checked the pantry for snacks he could stuff into pockets.

Except there's a thing that happens when you're trying not to get caught. Your luck always runs out at the exact wrong moment. Diane stood next to doorway. She wasn't even surprised. She didn't say anything at first. She just watched him, arms crossed, while he froze in place, jar in hand, bread pressed tight under his arm.

"Well," Diane said, sounding tired more than angry, "are you planning a midnight picnic or just emptying the fridge for sport?"

He shrugged, or tried to. He set the food on the counter and kept his hands visible, like he was being questioned by airport security.

"I'm hungry," he said, which even he knew sounded pathetic. "Couldn't sleep."

She let that hang in the air. "So you needed all of this?" She nodded at the towel full of supplies, the backpack sagging open on the floor, the trail of string cheese wrappers like breadcrumbs for anyone paying attention.

He didn't answer. He watched her, waiting for the lecture or the threats or maybe just an accusation. None came. She looked at him for a long moment, then nodded at the stairs.

"Upstairs. Now. Leave the food." She moved aside, giving him the sort of space that lets you know you don't have a choice.

He picked up the towel, slung the backpack over his shoulder, and walked past her. She didn't follow right away. When she did, he could hear her soft steps behind him, calm and slow, like she was leading him to an exam room.

On top of Rebecca Anne's bed, Diane had already laid out an outfit for him: tutu, tights, ballet shoes, the works. She must have known he'd try something, or maybe she just liked being prepared.

"You want to tip-toe around?" she said, nodding at the dress. "Fine. Tomorrow you're in this. An appropriate outfit for tip-toeing. All day. If you want to act like a ballerina, you'll do it a ballerina."

Drake didn't say anything. He just stood there, staring at the neat pile of clothes and the matching set of white tights, as if maybe if he waited long enough, the whole room would go away.

Susan appeared in the doorway. She looked at the outfit, then at him. "You make us do the most bizarre things, Drake."

"I'm not making you do anything," Drake replied.

"Don't talk back to your mother," Dianne snapped. "When you're dressed, come to me. I want to take some pictures." She left with her sister, who seemed to be following Diane's lead completely.

The young man in the dress waited until they left, then sat on the bed and stared at the wall. He knew he should want to rip the place apart, to yell, to throw the furniture everywhere just out of spite. But he didn't. He should be furious. Instead, he felt... like he didn't want to cause trouble. Frustrated, he slammed himself back onto the bed, staring at the ceiling, his breath uneven. "What the hell is wrong with me?" he muttered.

He should want to wreck everything in sight. No answer came. Just the quiet hum of the house and, his chest rising and falling in uneven breaths. The pink walls, the delicate lace curtains, the neat row of stuffed animals on the shelf — it all felt like it was closing in on him.

His fists tightened as his gaze landed on the scrapbook sitting on the desk.

The same scrapbook that had rattled him before. The one that had made his skin crawl.

Drake shot up, crossing the room in two strides, snatching the book off the desk. He wanted to *rip it apart*, to tear every perfectly arranged photo, to *destroy* it.

He sat with the scrapbook in his lap, the glittery stickers poking into his palm. The thing looked harmless, like a preschool art project, but it still had a way of staring you down. He flipped it open, mostly to prove he wasn't afraid.

He looked at the first page. Rebecca Anne in ballet slippers, standing in the front yard. The kind of picture you find in a frame on a grandmother's side table. He looked over at the ballet outfit on the bed and confirmed it was the same clothes. Next, a picture with Rebecca Anne with a stuffed animal at the window, sunlight falling across her face. Then, another — Rebecca Anne kneeling in a patch of flowers, grinning like she'd just been told she was the favorite child.

He flipped ahead, moving faster. The pages made a soft swish, and each one looked just like the last. All pinks and yellows, all smiles, all Rebecca Anne.

Then he stopped.

There was a picture that didn't quite fit. Rebecca Anne stood in the backyard, a small scratch just below her cheekbone. A glitch in the perfection she embodied. He stared at it. The cut was a little red, still healing. The memory that followed wasn't a flicker, not vague half-recalled notion. No, this was clear. Years back. Running in the yard. Playing, or probably trying to tackle someone. Skidding on the grass, not seeing the low branch until it was too late. Feeling the sting. His mother running over, fussing with a tissue, muttering about boys and their scraped faces. The bandage, the smell of that stuff she always put on wounds. The cut, right there. Same spot.

He said, "No," a little too quietly, like if he kept his voice low, the memory would go away. He kept looking at the picture. There had to be some explanation, though he couldn't think of one.

He looked around. For a moment, everything looked familiar: the soft curtains, the bow on the lamp, the way his own face looked in the mirror over the vanity. Then they felt wrong. Very, very wrong. He didn't want to see his face there, not in this room, not in this light.

He put his hands to his forehead, as if he could hold in what was trying to break out. The book sat on his lap, heavy. The quiet in the room seemed louder than before.

He shoved the book aside, lunging off the bed. The floor felt too uncertain beneath his feet as he stumbled toward the door, yanking it open with more force than necessary.

His heart pounded in his chest as he tore down the hallway, the sound of his own breathing deafening in his ears. He careened down the stairs, through the dimly lit house, his pulse pounding.

Drake lurched to a stop at the bottom of the stairs, his chest heaving.

"Mom!" he yelled, his voice cracking. He didn't care how desperate he sounded. He didn't care if Diane heard. He *needed* answers.



Susan barely flinched. She pulled off her jacket, smoothing it down as she turned toward the living room. “What is it, Drake?” she asked, her voice calm.

Too calm. Too calm to be *not* expecting this. Drake’s blood turned to ice.

He stormed after her, his hands clenched into fists. His thoughts were spinning too fast, too wild, his head filled with too many questions, too much fear.

“Tell me the truth,” he demanded, his voice hoarse. “Tell me what’s going on.”

Susan turned to face him fully now, her expression unreadable.

Drake’s breath came fast and shallow, his pulse a wild drumbeat in his ears. The photo he’d torn from the scrapbook trembled in his grasp as he stormed into the living room, his heart hammering against his ribs. Susan and Diane were seated, their expressions calm, unreadable — a stark contrast to the chaos churning inside him.

“What is this?” His voice cracked as he slapped the photo down onto the coffee table, the sharp sound echoing through the room. He glared at both women, his eyes wide, desperate. “You need to tell me what the hell is going on!”

Susan calmly reached for the photo, her movements unhurried, almost too casual. She examined it, her face giving nothing away, while Diane, perched elegantly on the armchair, crossed her arms and leaned back, studying Drake with a detached curiosity.

“Drake,” Diane began, her tone smooth, carefully placating. “You need to calm down. Whatever’s got you so worked up, I’m sure it’s not as dramatic as you’re making it out to be.”

Drake’s fists tightened, his knuckles turning white. The calmness in Diane’s voice felt like a slap in the face, stoking the fire inside him. His finger shot out, trembling, pointing directly at her.

“Don’t you fuckin’ tell me to calm down!” he snapped, his voice rising. “I know you’ve been messing with me, Diane. I know what you’ve been doing!”

Diane raised an eyebrow, tilting her head ever so slightly, her expression perfectly composed. She glanced at Susan, then back at Drake, feigning confusion. “Messing with you? Drake, what are you talking about?”

His breathing grew more erratic, his chest rising and falling as he struggled to find the words, to force out the twisted thoughts clawing at the inside of his skull.

“This!” He jabbed a finger at the photo. “*This* picture! That cut on Rebecca Anne’s cheek — I had that cut! The exact same spot, the exact same scab!”

Susan's gaze lingered on the photo, her eyes flicking back to Drake, her expression softening into something almost pitying. "Drake, you've been under a lot of stress lately," she said gently. "I think you're confusing things."

"Confusing things?" He laughed bitterly, the sound harsh and brittle. "You've taken my room, you've forced me into girls' clothes, made me go to school in them, and now this? How can you sit there and act like *I'm* the one with the problem?"

Diane leaned forward, her eyes sharp, her voice carrying a steely edge beneath its softness. "Drake, you've been struggling. Your behavior has been erratic. Maybe you should consider that this paranoia is part of a larger problem."

Drake's heart thudded painfully against his chest. He felt cornered, trapped between their calm, rational words and the chaos twisting inside him.

"I'm not paranoid!" he shouted, his voice breaking. "I know what's real! I know what I *know!*"

Diane sighed, a heavy, performative sigh. "Sometimes, when people are under a lot of pressure, their mind plays tricks on them. Memories get distorted. Mixed up."

Drake's vision blurred with tears of frustration. His hands shook as he fought to keep control, to hold onto something solid amidst the unraveling thread of his reality.

"You're lying," he whispered, the words trembling on his lips. "You're both lying."

Susan set the photo down, reaching out as if to touch his arm, but he flinched back, recoiling from her.

"We're just worried about you, Drake," she said softly. "You need to *trust* us."

The word felt like a knife twisting in his gut.

"No," he spat, stepping back, his body tense and ready to bolt. "I can't trust either of you."

Diane's eyes hardened, her patience wearing thin. "This behavior isn't helping anyone, least of all you. Go to your room and calm yourself down before you do something you'll regret."

Drake's gaze flickered between them, his mind racing for a way out, an escape from the suffocating trap they had laid around him. But the walls seemed to close in tighter, their composed faces only making his own reflection in their eyes seem more frayed, more lost.

His eyes locked onto Diane, who sat still, composed, her arms folded neatly over her lap. She wasn't even *trying* to look surprised.

That only made his blood boil hotter.

"You're a hypnotherapist's nurse," Drake spat, taking a step forward. "You know *exactly* what I'm talking about. You've been hypnotizing me — making me think I'm Rebecca Anne every summer."

Diane tilted her head, arching an eyebrow like he was nothing more than an unruly child throwing a tantrum.

"That's a wild accusation, Drake." Her voice was even, too *calm*. "Why on earth would I do something like that?"

Drake let out a sharp, bitter laugh. "Don't act innocent! Every time I was 'away at camp,' you weren't just making me *act* like I was Rebecca Anne — you were making me *into* her! You implanted fake memories or something to cover it up!"

Susan, who had been standing quietly to the side, shifted uncomfortably. Her frown deepened, but her voice remained soft, careful.

"Drake, you're imagining things," she said. "You've been to camp every summer for years. I've seen the photos, heard the stories..."

Drake cut her off, shaking his head violently.

"What stories?" he snapped. "I *remember* going to camp, sure, but I can't remember *anything* specific. No cabins, no counselors, no campfires — nothing! It's like the memories are there, but they're *blurry*, like they don't belong to me."

He pointed at Diane, his arm shaking with the force of his rage.

"That's because *you* put them there, didn't you?" His voice was rising now, frantic, desperate. "To cover up the fact that I wasn't at camp — I was *here*, learning to be Rebecca Anne."

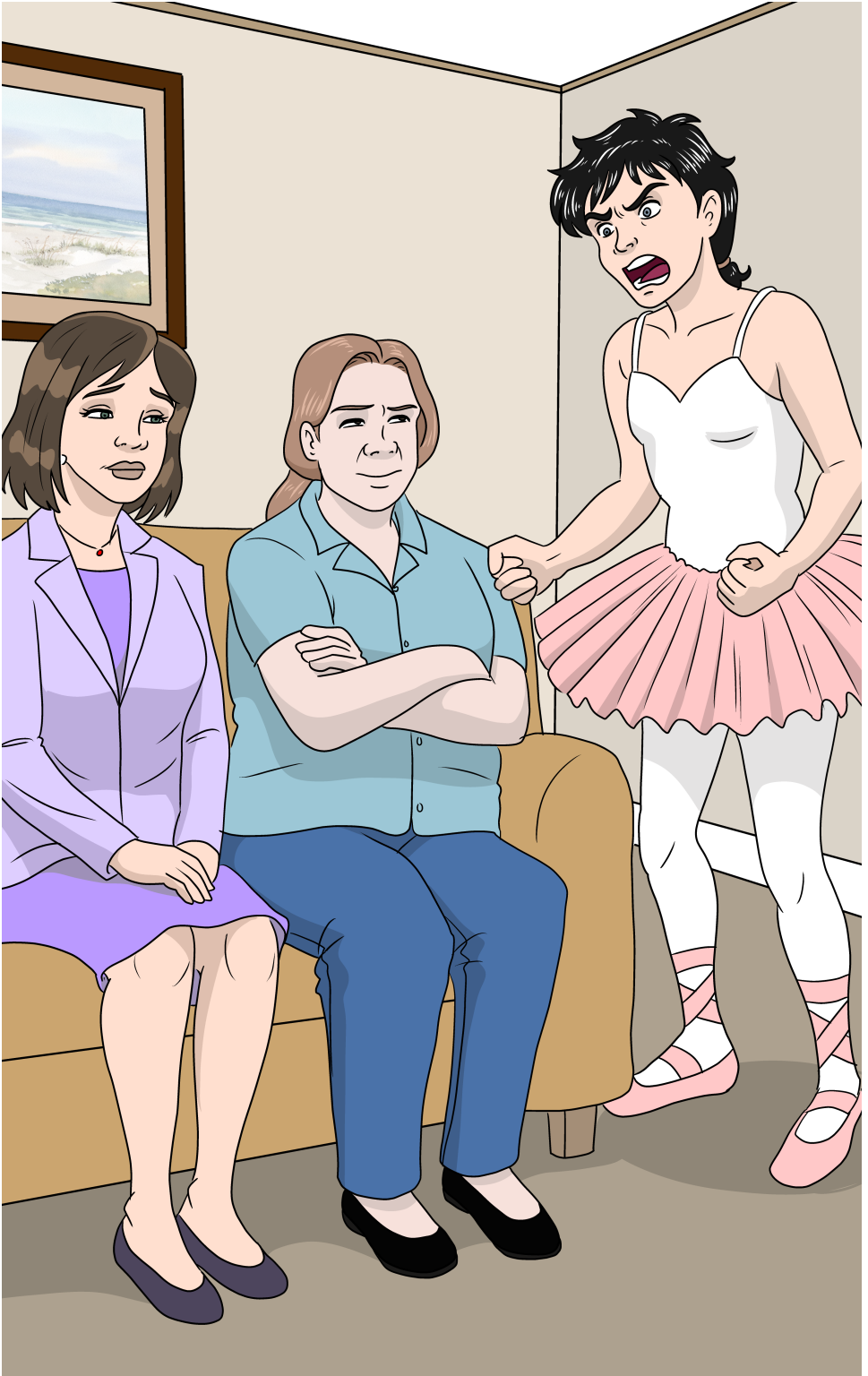
Susan's eyes widened slightly, and for the first time, her calm demeanor wavered.

Drake seized on it, pressing forward, his voice sharp as a blade.

"You tell me I went to camp, but I can't remember a single *real* thing about it. But *this*..." He grabbed the photo from the table and held it up, his hand trembling. "*This* I remember."

He swallowed hard, forcing himself to meet Susan's gaze.

"That's me," he whispered, his voice raw. "That's *me* in that photo."



The room was unbearably silent, except for the ticking grandfather clock in the foyer. The only thing louder was the pounding in Drake's chest, the heat coursing through his veins as his own words echoed in the space around him.

Susan stood near the coffee table, her arms crossed tightly over her chest, a soft but deeply unsettled frown lining her face.

Diane remained seated, poised like a statue, her lips pressed together in an unreadable expression.

Drake's fingers curled into his palms. His breathing was uneven, ragged.

Susan sighed, shaking her head slowly, her expression one of gentle concern. "Drake, you're just upset. Rebecca Anne coming home full-time is a big change, and it's natural to feel threatened by it."

Drake let out a sharp, spiteful laugh, his frustration boiling over. He turned away from them for a moment, dragging his hands down his face before spinning back around.

"This isn't about her *living* here full-time!" he barked. "This is about the fact that Rebecca Anne *isn't real!* She's too perfect to be real! And I can't even remember anything specific about her from longer than three years ago."

His voice wavered slightly, his own disbelief thick in his throat.

"She's a *fake*."

Susan's mouth tightened. She didn't say anything.

Drake slammed his hand down on the coffee table, making both women flinch slightly.

"No girl is that well-behaved. No girl would *want* to be that perfect! Rebecca Anne doesn't exist because no one would ever *choose* to live like that unless someone *built* her! Unless someone *made* them that way!"

Susan flinched again.

Diane, however, remained unfazed. If anything, her gaze sharpened ever so slightly, but she still sat poised, unaffected, letting him rant.

The tension in the room was suffocating.

Finally, Diane leaned forward slightly, resting her hands on her lap, her tone sharp and precise.

"And why, exactly, would we go to all that trouble?" she asked, her voice clipped but cool. "Do you realize how *ridiculous* you sound, Drake? Hypnosis, false memories, fake identities — it's *absurd*."

Drake's entire body trembled with rage. He took a step closer, his voice dropping into a low, dangerous growl.

“You did it to make Rebecca Anne *real*,” he hissed.

Diane blinked once, slowly.

Drake’s breathing was labored now, his chest rising and falling in sharp bursts.

“You needed her to have a history — friends, experiences, people who remember her — so that when she *arrived*, no one would question who she was. You’ve been building her up for years.”

The words felt like fire coming out of his mouth.

Diane tilted her head, her lips pressing into a thin line.

“I was never at camp, was I?” he whispered, his voice hoarse.

Diane exhaled slowly, pressing her fingers together as if considering her words.

“Drake,” she said smoothly, “you’re very tired. You’ve been overwhelmed, and I think you need to take a moment to breathe.”

“Don’t patronize me!” he snapped.

Susan took a hesitant step toward him. “Sweetheart...”

Drake recoiled, his eyes burning. “Don’t call me that!”

His whole body trembled as he took another shaky breath, but his mind was clear now. He wasn’t insane. He wasn’t making this up. They had done *something* to him, and now they were scrambling to keep him from remembering.

The air in the living room felt suffocating, thick with something unspoken, something lurking beneath the surface. Drake’s heart hammered against his ribs, his breath coming too fast, too shallow. The photo still lay on the coffee table, its edges slightly curled where his fingers had clenched it too tightly.

Susan reached forward, her movements slow, deliberate. She picked up the photo and placed it gently back on the table as if smoothing away the weight of his accusations.

Then, she looked at him. Not with anger. Not with frustration.

With *pity*.

“Drake,” she said softly, her voice warm, steady. “I hate to see you like this. You’re upset because Rebecca Anne is moving in full-time, and you feel like you’re being replaced,” she continued, tilting her head slightly, her expression filled with gentle understanding. “It’s natural to feel that way, but you’re not losing anything. Rebecca Anne is your sister, and she’s part of this family.”

Drake's breath halted. His whole body felt like it was tightening, like the world was getting smaller, like something inside him was being *pushed down* before he could even grasp what it was.

"You're just seeing things where there's nothing to be seen," Diane said.

Diane stood, smoothing the front of her blouse. Her usual unreadable expression softened just slightly, like she was making an effort to appear kind, patient. She stepped beside Susan, both of them now looking at him with matching expressions — calm, composed, *pitying*.

"Drake," Diane said, her voice as smooth as glass, her tone gentle but firm. "This is inevitable. Rebecca Anne is coming home for good, and the sooner you accept that, the easier it will be."

"I know what you're doing!" Drake complained. "How do you explain everything?" How do you explain... Explain..." He was running out of determination, even starting to doubt himself and his ravings. Then he pulled at the dress he was wearing. "How do you explain that all her clothes fit me... *Exactly?*"

His mother smiled. "I don't know, Drake. How do *you* explain it?"

Drake's vision blurred for a second. He swallowed, shaking his head, but no words came out.

Susan took a small step closer, and suddenly, the room felt like it was shrinking.

Her smile was warm, maternal, comforting in a way that made Drake's skin crawl.

"With Rebecca Anne home, you're not losing anything, sweetheart," she murmured. "Just embrace the change."

Diane and Susan stood before him, holding their hands out.

Drake stared at them, the sound of his own pulse roaring in his ears.

Then, his gaze flicked downward at his hands.

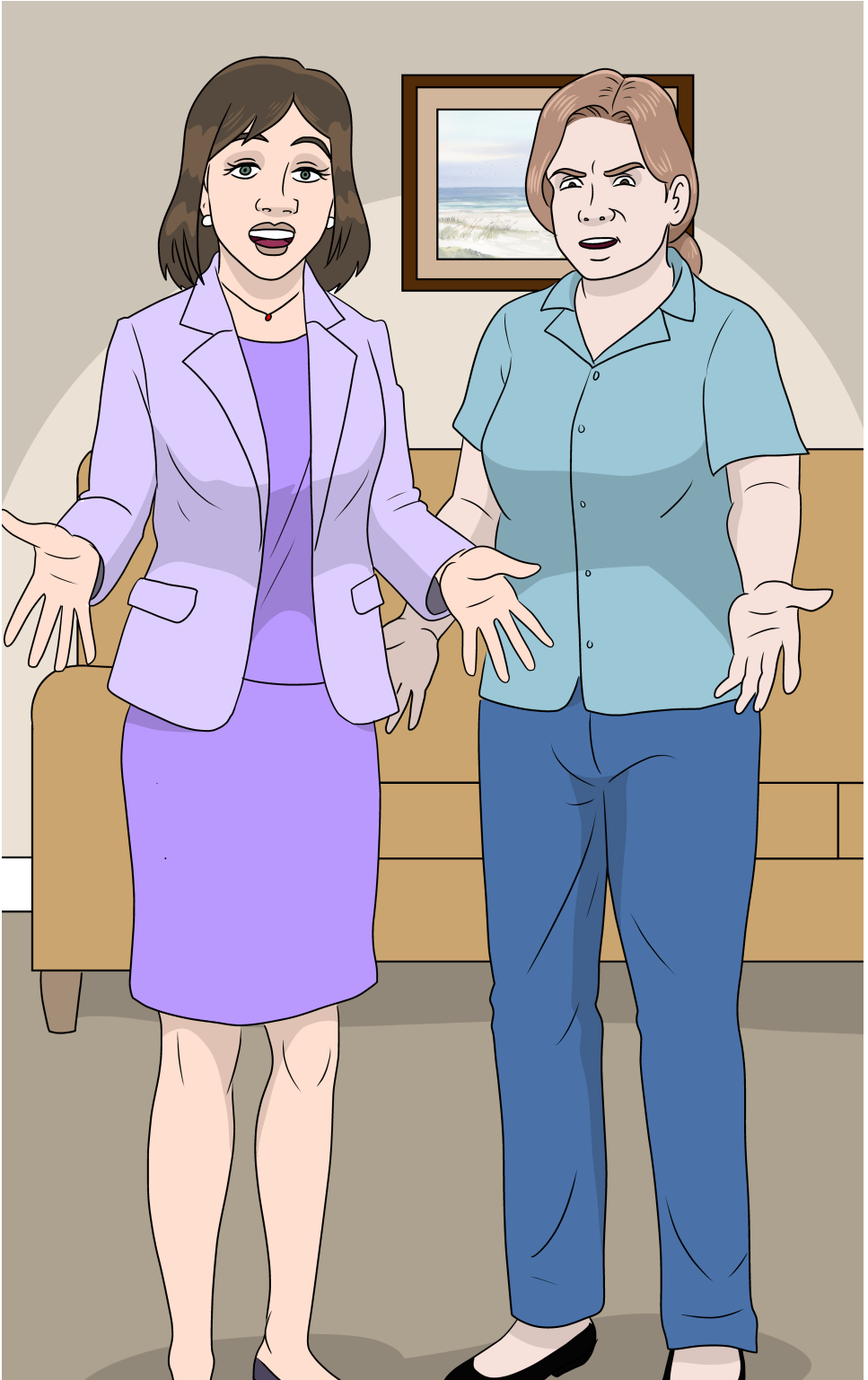
And his whole world *dropped*.

His fingernails...

Pink.

Only, this time, he remembered painting them.





The soft glow of the vanity lights bathed Rebecca Anne's face in a warm, gentle radiance. She sat with perfect posture, her white blouse pristine, the thin black ribbon at her collar tied neatly. The knee-length skirt she wore draped elegantly over her crossed legs, the fabric crisp, unwrinkled.

In the mirror's reflection, a poised young woman gazed back at her.

She reached for the lip gloss resting beside the neatly arranged cosmetics. Her hand moved with practiced ease, steady and deliberate as she unscrewed the wand. The faint scent of vanilla and strawberries filled the air as she traced the gloss over her lips, the soft shimmer catching the light.

Behind her, Susan stood with her hands gently clasped in front of her, watching with quiet admiration.

She leaned in slightly, the warmth in her voice unmistakable.

"Do you need help with your makeup? I could show you a few tricks for blending."

Rebecca Anne paused, tilting her head ever so slightly. She glanced at her mother in the mirror before offering a small, composed smile.

"No, thank you, Mother. I can do it myself. Every girl knows how to do her makeup properly."

Susan's heart swelled with pride.

"You're absolutely right," she said softly.

Rebecca Anne returned her focus to the mirror, the delicate strokes of the lip gloss wand never faltering. She moved with care and tenderness, the same delicate movements a girl who prized her femininity and reveled in softness and gentility would make.

Her mother had always said that presentation mattered. That refinement and elegance weren't just traits, but expectations.

And she had never failed to meet them.

Once she was satisfied with the even coat of gloss, she placed the wand back in the bottle and put the bottle down precisely where it belonged, adjusting the placement slightly until it was perfectly aligned with the rest of the cosmetics.

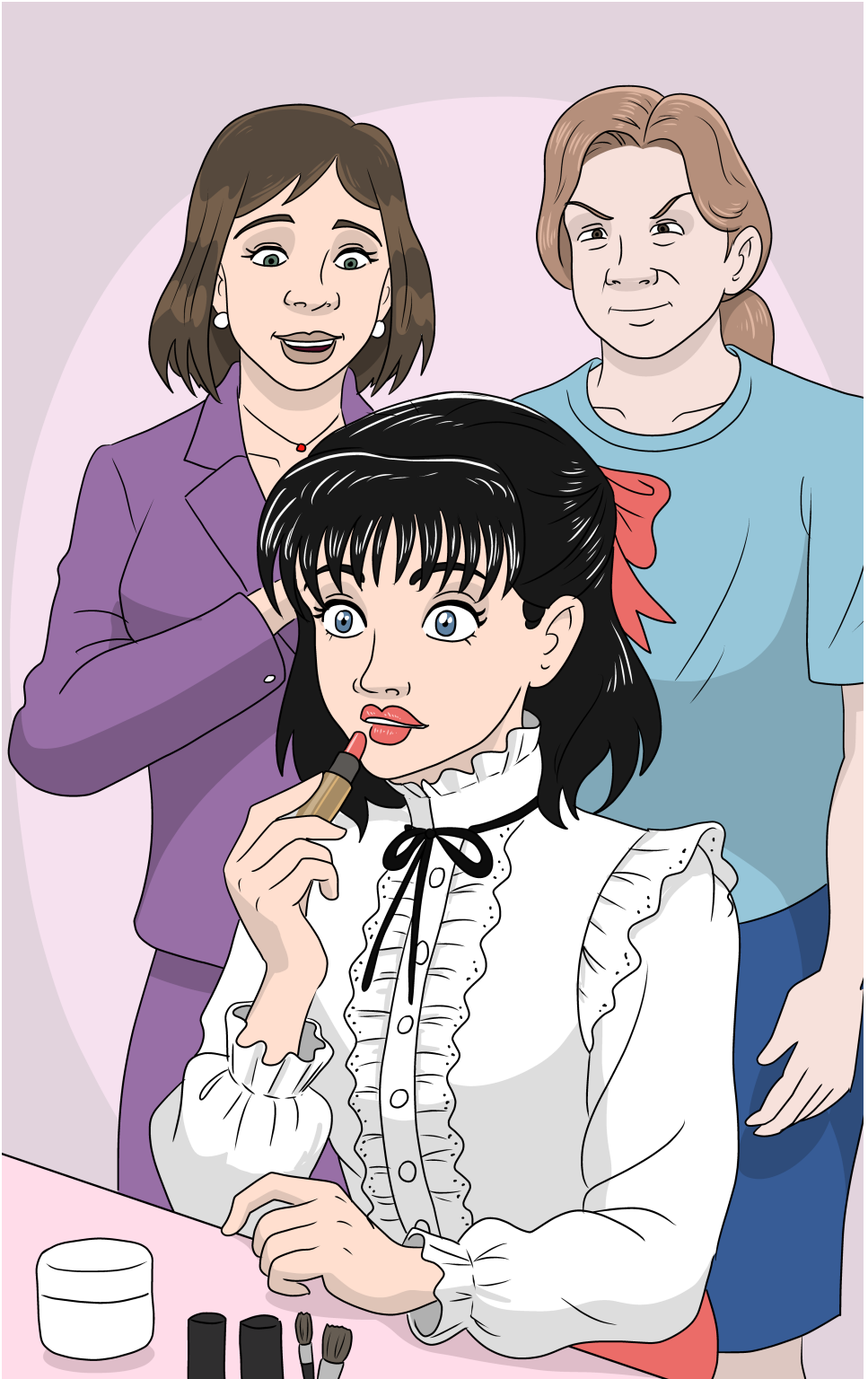
Then she turned to Susan, her expression calm, composed.

"How does it look?"

Susan's smile widened, warmth filling her gaze.

"Perfect," she said, her voice brimming with approval. "You look beautiful, Rebecca Anne."

Rebecca Anne smiled back, a soft, serene curve of her lips.



The morning light filtered through the lace curtains, casting a warm glow over the pastel-colored room. Everything was in its place — the floral bedding, the neatly arranged stuffed animals, and the perfectly aligned row of perfume bottles on the vanity.

She adjusted her blouse, ensuring the high collar and thin black ribbon sat just right before reaching for a pearl bracelet and slipping it onto her wrist.

Then came the knock at the door.

A firm, even rhythm.

Rebecca Anne didn't flinch. She merely glanced at her reflection once more before turning toward the sound.

Diane stood in the doorway, her expression brisk, arms folded.

"Rebecca Anne," Diane said, her voice steady, controlled. "Corey and a few of Drake's old friends are at the door. They're asking if he's coming to the party tonight."

Rebecca Anne paused, fingers lightly resting on the edge of her vanity table.

"The party?" She asked herself. "Oh yes, the one Drake wanted me to go to."

She glanced at Susan, who sat on the edge of the bed, smoothing out a light pink cardigan in her lap.

Then, just as smoothly, her soft smile returned.

"I've changed my mind," she said pleasantly, brushing an imaginary speck of dust from her sleeve. "I don't want to go to the party. We're going shopping for bras and panties today, remember?"

Susan let out a light, affectionate laugh, tucking a loose curl behind Rebecca Anne's ear.

"She's so excited to pick out her first bra," her mother said, her tone warm with amusement. "It's important for proper support as her figure develops."

Rebecca Anne tilted her chin slightly, eyes bright.

"Yes, Mother," she replied. "A girl always remembers her first bra."

Diane lingered for a moment, her sharp gaze flickering between them. Then, with a short nod, she turned and strode back downstairs.

Rebecca Anne turned back to her mirror, adjusting her ribbon, smoothing down the gentle folds of her knee-length skirt. Everything was just delightful.

Downstairs, Diane reached the door and pulled it open.

A small group of teens stood on the porch — Corey at the front, his hands shoved into the pockets of his worn-out hoodie.

"Where's Drake?" Corey asked, his usual smirk slightly subdued.

Diane didn't hesitate.

"Drake isn't here anymore," she said, her voice firm, final.

She didn't elaborate.

Corey shifted on the porch, the heels of his worn-out sneakers scuffing against the wooden planks. His hands were still buried in his hoodie pockets, but his patience was wearing thin. Around him, the other guys muttered amongst themselves, their frustration clear.

"Man, it's not even worth going now," Rick grumbled, shoving his hands into his jeans. "Drake was the whole point."

"Yeah," Dylan added, shaking his head. "It's not really a party without a little chaos, you know?"

Jess, who had been leaning against the railing, shrugged. "Guess we'll just have to find something else to do."

There were a few more mumbled complaints, but one by one, the group turned away, heading back toward their cars.

Except for Corey.

He wasn't letting this go.

His gut told him something was *off*. All those crazy things Drake said. What if there really was something going on?

So he stayed, watching as Diane shut the door and disappeared back inside the house.

Corey exhaled sharply, then lifted his fist and knocked again — harder this time.

"What do you mean, Drake isn't here?" he called through the door. "Where is he?"

For a moment, silence.

Then, the door creaked open again, and Diane stood there, her expression calm, composed, as if she had expected him to still be there.

"Corey," she said smoothly, her voice carrying that usual soft patience that had always driven him crazy. "I already told you — Drake is no longer here."

Corey scowled, taking a step forward.

"What does that even mean?" His frustration bubbled over, making his voice sharp. "Where did he go? He wouldn't just leave without telling me! Did you

send him to military school or something? His mom is *always* threatening to do that!”

Diane's face didn't change. Not a single flicker of guilt or hesitation.

Instead, she stepped onto the porch, carefully pulling the door shut behind her.

“Corey,” she said gently, as if speaking to a child, “I understand you're disappointed, but I have nothing more to tell you.”

She met his gaze, unwavering.

“Drake is gone.”

Corey opened his mouth, ready to argue, ready to push for answers — but before he could get a single word out, the door behind Susan swung open.

A soft click of heels on wood.

Corey froze.

Stepping onto the porch was a girl — delicate, poised, with a grace that made the air feel suddenly like a cool breeze. Her white blouse was buttoned neatly to the collar, a thin black ribbon tied in a perfect bow beneath it. A knee-length skirt swayed gently with her movements, and her long, chestnut-colored hair was styled to perfection, secured by a soft pink ribbon.

Corey's breath hitched.

That face.

The soft smile, the delicate curve of her lips, the way her wide, expressive eyes met his with quiet recognition.

“...Becky?” The name slipped from his lips before he could stop it, his voice cracking slightly.

Rebecca Anne's cheeks flushed the lightest shade of pink.

“I wasn't sure if you'd remember me,” she said softly, her voice carrying the same gentle cadence that had been etched into Corey's memories.

Corey felt his chest tighten, his mind reeling.

Last summer.

Late-night walks under the stars. Quiet conversations by the lake. Soft laughter that lingered long after the moment had passed.

And that one night. That one perfect, unforgettable kiss.

“Becky...” Corey swallowed, barely finding his voice. “You're back.”

Rebecca Anne gave a small, knowing nod, tucking a loose strand of hair behind her ear.

Corey's heart pounded. He had *never* told Drake about her.

Never mentioned how he had spent those long summer nights sneaking away, stealing moments that felt like they belonged to a different world.

Because Drake *hated* his sister. *Despised* her.

And Corey had kissed her. His best friend's sister.

Now, standing before him, Rebecca Anne looked so effortlessly perfect, so composed, so *untouchable*.

And yet, all Corey could think about was the way she had looked at him that night under the stars — vulnerable, open, like he had been the only person in the world who saw her for more than just her flawless exterior.

He couldn't say anything. Couldn't move. Couldn't think.

Corey barely had time to process the fact that Rebecca Anne, his summer love, was standing right in front of him, let alone the warmth of her soft fingers slipping into his hand. His breath caught in his throat as he looked down, his gaze tracing the delicate way her fingers curled around his. Her nails, painted a soft, glistening pink, shimmered under the porch light.

Susan, still standing just behind Rebecca Anne, gave a small, approving nod.

Encouraged, Rebecca Anne took a step closer.

"Come inside," she said, her voice barely above a whisper. "We need to catch up."

Corey's throat went dry. For the moment, all he could do was nod.

Rebecca Anne smiled gently, then turned, leading him through the open doorway. He followed, his heart pounding, his fingers still tangled with hers.

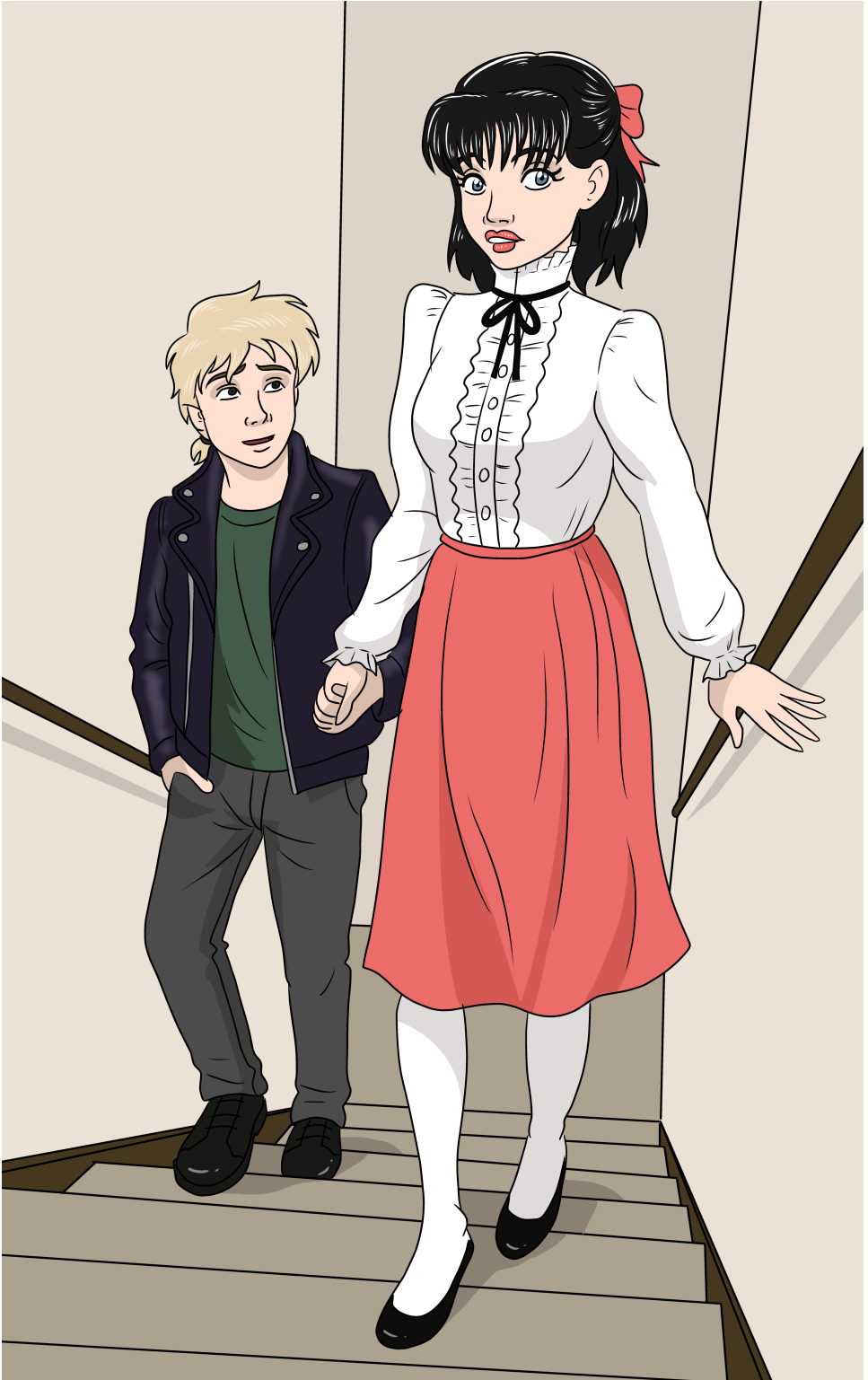
The air inside was different from what Corey remembered. The house smelled like fresh linen and lavender, soft and inviting, not like the chaos he was used to when he and Drake had spent their afternoons causing trouble here.

Rebecca Anne led him toward the staircase, her grip on his hand light but certain. As they walked through the hallway, Corey barely noticed anything but the way her presence seemed to command the space around her — effortlessly graceful, like every step was placed with the practice of a dancer.

They passed a slightly ajar door. Drake's old room.

Corey couldn't spare it a glance — his attention too wrapped up in the way Rebecca Anne's golden-brown hair cascaded down her back, the soft bounce of her curls as she ascended the stairs.

But if he *had* looked, really looked, he would have seen it.



The walls, once littered with posters of bands and street racing decals, were now lined with mirrors.

A ballet barre stretched along one side of the room, positioned in perfect alignment with the reflections. The floor, once scuffed from the weight of Drake's boots and carelessly tossed belongings, was now smooth, polished wood, designed for tender steps of graceful movement, not reckless abuse.

But Corey didn't notice. His world, in that moment, was nothing more than the girl leading him up the stairs, her fingers feeling warm in his.

Corey followed Rebecca Anne into her room, the scent of lavender and fresh linens immediately washing over him. The space was soft, delicate. Every detail, from the floral bedspread to the neatly arranged stuffed animals on a lace-trimmed shelf, was carefully curated. It was so different from when he was sneaking in and out with Drake. With her in it, it felt like a very special place.

Rebecca Anne turned to him with a small, knowing smile, her fingers still lightly clasping his.

"Sit with me?" she asked, her voice light as air.

Corey nodded, allowing himself to be led toward the edge of the bed. The mattress gave slightly beneath them, the fabric cool under his hands. He stole a glance at her — her posture was straight, composed, yet there was something warm in the way she tilted her head toward him.

He cleared his throat, suddenly aware of how *close* they were.

Rebecca Anne looked up at him, her cheeks tinged with pink. "I missed you, Corey," she said softly. "I thought of you every day at boarding school."

Corey's chest tightened. He swallowed, trying to find the right words, but his mind was spinning.

He took in every detail of her face — the soft curve of her jaw, the way her lashes fluttered slightly, the way her lips, full and perfectly shaped, parted just a little as she spoke.

And those eyes. Those liquid pools that drew him in. So big, so deep. He could spend the rest of his life staring into Rebecca Anne's captivating eyes.

He had spent the past year wondering if what they had meant anything, if it had just been a fleeting summer moment, a secret neither of them would ever speak of again.

And yet, here she was.

"I thought I might have scared you off," he admitted, his voice barely above a whisper. His fingers twitched at his sides before he finally reached out,

brushing a loose strand of her silky brown hair away from her face. "I want to be better," he murmured. "For you."

Rebecca Anne's lips curled into a soft smile, her eyes glistening.

"You'd do that for me?" she asked, tilting her head slightly.

Corey nodded.

Rebecca Anne glanced down at their still-intertwined fingers before squeezing his hand gently. "I could teach you some ballet."

He blinked.

Her voice was eager. "We could practice together. Every day. You and me."

Corey nodded. "I'd like that," he said.

"There's an ice cream social at church tomorrow. Would you... Well, I don't want to be so forward."

"We can go," Corey said, eagerly. "I mean... I'd like to go. I'll even comb my hair."

"That would be ever so perfect," Rebecca Anne replied, pushing herself forward.

Corey tilted his head slightly to the side, as he leaned forward. The space between them felt smaller now, the air charged with crackling electricity.

Rebecca Anne's eyes shut closed, her breath steady, her lips parting slightly.

Corey leaned further in.

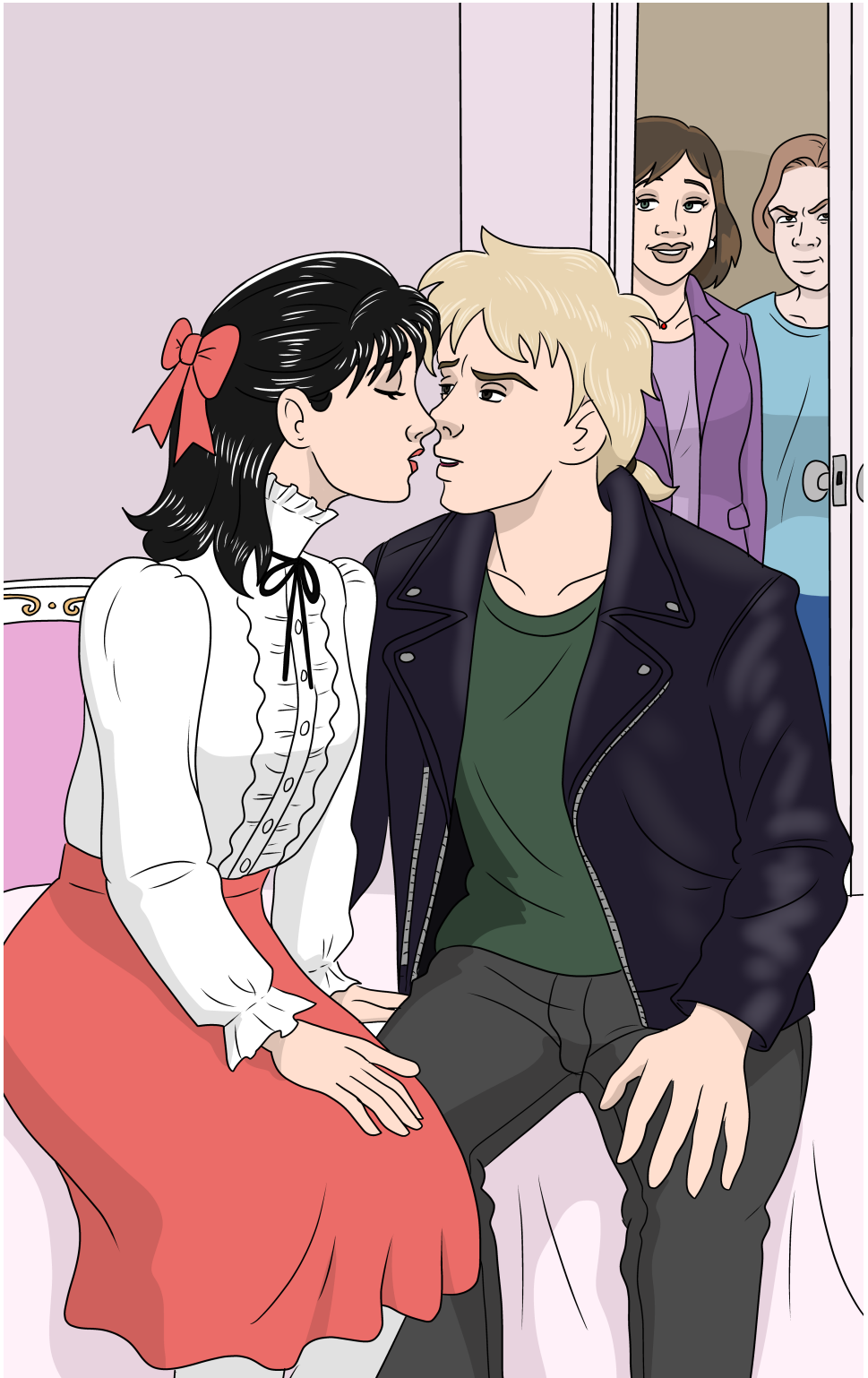
Just as their lips were about to meet, something shifted in the hallway.

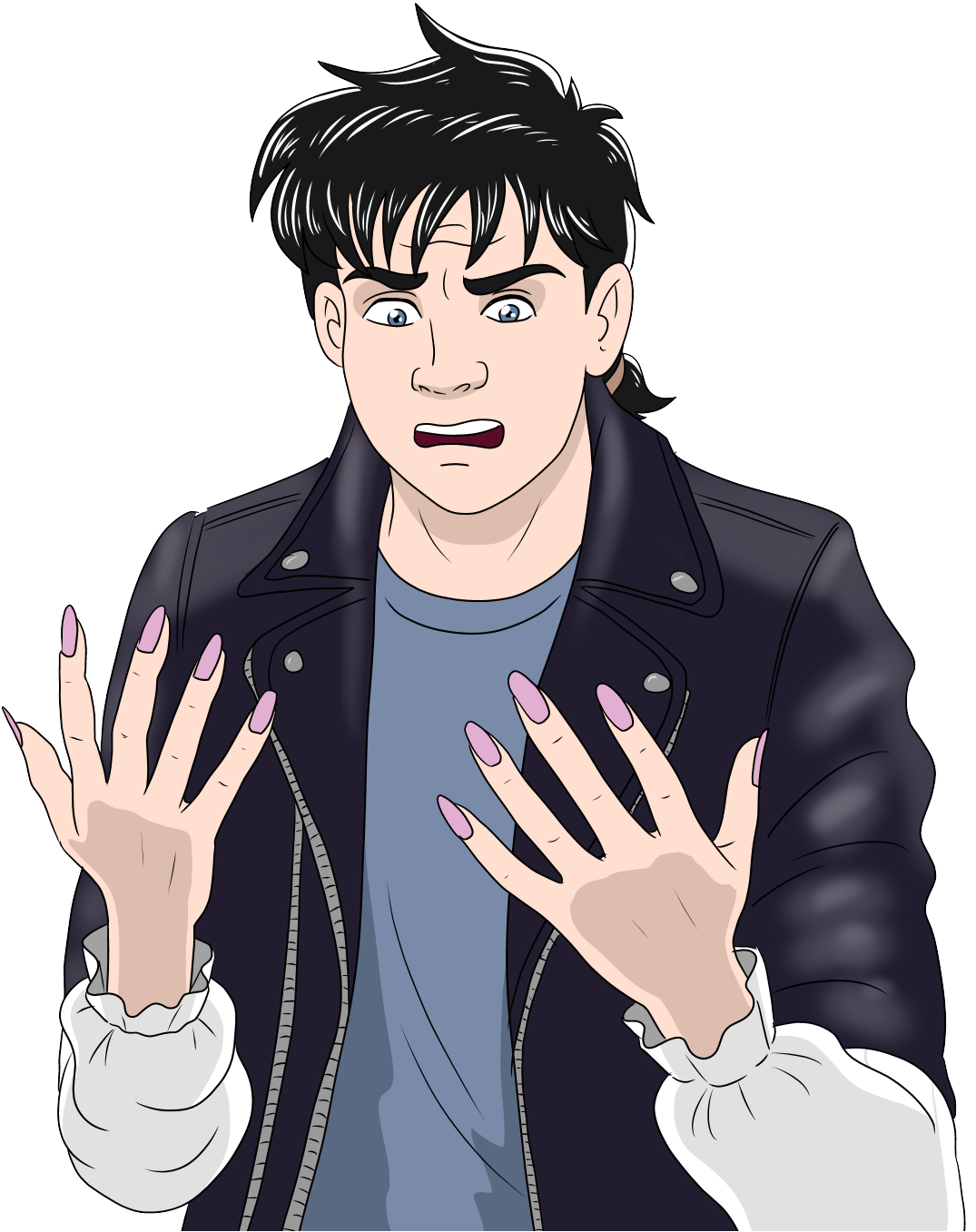
Neither of them could possibly notice in their state of mind.

But just outside the room, Susan and Diane stood side by side, watching through the slightly open door.

Their expressions were serene, their eyes glowing with satisfaction. Rebecca Anne was home for good.

The End





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Sick Puppy Comics

Making Friends

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Three college students sign up for a six-month isolation experiment. Things start to get a little strange, and they begin to lose their masculinity day by day. Yet, they don't seem to even notice... Full Color Comic Book / 38 pages

The Pet Sitter

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Asked to look after a supermodel's pet for a while, James finds himself thrust out of his own apartment and into hers. Day by day, it seems like circumstances adapt James to become the resident of a supermodel's lifestyle. Full Color Comic Book / 29 pages

A Curious Curse

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. When teen goth Brandyn gets his drivers' license, he thinks it's a ticket to adulthood. Unfortunately, he's already cashed a ticket in the opposite direction. Full Color Comic Book / 27 pages

Boys Will Be Girls

Story & Art by Fraylim, Script by KK, Ink & Color by Joe Six-Pack. The "Summer Blossom" camp welcomes a new group of young men. But although it may be an all-boys camp when they arrive, it's girls-only when they leave. Full Color Comic Book / 100 pages

Double-Crossed

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. Jesse is on the run from justice. When he finds an old friend who can help him, that old friend seems more interested in helping Jesse become a woman. Comic / 24 pages

The Step-Witch

Story by Joe Six-Pack. Dillon has a new step-mother. Problem is that she and Dillon don't get along. More of a problem for Dillon is that she's a witch — and wants a daughter. Full Color Comic Book / 17 pages

The Charm

Story by Joe Six-Pack, art by Osoku WARUI. Gavin is a student who laments his boring life. Then he crosses paths with Krista. Things are about to change, and not necessarily for the better. Comic / 24 pages

College Can Change a Man

Story & art by Joe Six-Pack. A small college has been hanging on to its male-dominated mindset for too long. Now, a new member of the board has arrived to make some changes. A lot of changes. Comic / 243 pages

Help Wanted 1

Story by James J Craft, art by RocketXpert. Three boys are getting far more than they bargained for when they get summer jobs at a woman's fancy mansion. Comic / 40 pages

Help Wanted 2

Story by James J Craft, art by RocketXpert. Three more boys are getting far more than they bargained for at a woman's fancy mansion, and three others are finding their places. Comic / 40 pages

What Popular Girls Do

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. A teaching assistant in high school is about to find out what it's like to go back to class — but as a saucy teenage girl with a bully boyfriend he needs to satisfy. Comic / 47 pages

Teens Transformed

She Made Me Into My Sister

"A Little Too Clever" by Joe Six-Pack. Wyatt wanted to help his girlfriend get revenge, but at what cost? As it turns out, a cost greater than any boy could have imagined. Book / 88 pages / 20 illustrations

He's a Valley Girl, Fer Sure

From the files of TGStories.com: "Corey Taylor's Big Bodacious Adventure" by Joe Six-Pack. For Corey, the only way he can get into college is to pretend to be a girl. But when does it stop being pretend? When he's cheerleader? A girlfriend? A beauty queen? Book / 78 pages / 17 illustrations

From Boys to Bridesmaids

"Always a Bridesmaid, Never a Groom" by James J Craft. Two spoiled and privileged boys are about to be put in their place by their new step-mother. And their place is by her side as her bridesmaids and daughters. Book / 77 Pages / 16 illustrations

Little Mis-ter Popular

"My Two Moms" by James J Craft, illustrations by rocketxpert. Thanks to his aunt's "Confidence Club," Leon will find a way to become popular, and to get over all his hang-ups... Including his masculinity. Book / 77 Pages / 17 illustrations

Bride to Be

By Joe Six-Pack. Derek and Cole grew up together as kids. One year, though, Cole has to start pitching in at the family wedding business. His life will never be the same. Book / 63 pages / 25 illustrations

Gone Girly for Good

"Big in Japan" by James J Craft. Mike and Ken were one-hit-wonder rock stars. Then they discovered they had fans in Japan, so they left to become famous. Then they discovered that the Japanese didn't know they were guys. Book / 77 pages / 26 illustrations

One Year in Tokyo

By James J Craft, illustrations by Kwon Lee Tran. Mickey is forced to spend a year with his father in Japan. However things often get confused when words get translated from English to Japanese, as Mickey soon finds out... Book / 87 pages / 20 illustrations

Mall Makeover Madness

"A Day at the Mall" by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Four boys are going to have one weird day at the mall. By the time the day is over, it's four girls who leave the mall to begin their new lives. Book / 109 pages / 25 illustrations

Convicts to Co-Eds

Story by Courtney Captisa & Claire Bear, illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Three teen boys are sent to a reform school. What they can't know is that they are about to be "reformed" all the way into skirts... And beyond. Book / 154 pages / 31 illustrations

Creating Samantha

Story by Cheryl Lynn, illustrations by The Might Fenek. Samuel was under the tutelage of his legal guardian, only his guardian had no intentions of letting him grow up male. Book / 70 pages / 16 illustrations

Crosley High Chronicles

By Joe Six-Pack. River is coming to a new school, and trying to fit in. The problem is the only way he's going to fit in is in skirts and heels. Book / 217 pages / 75 illustrations

Student Exchange

By Joe Six-Pack. Kelley Sue's convinced a French exchange student to disguise himself as a girl. What happens when she realizes he has no intention of returning back home? Book / 77 pages / 22 illustrations

The Substitute Ski Bunny

By Joe Six-Pack. Walker is a young man who's fallen in love with a girl. The only way he can get close to her is to dress up and become her roommate. It's not going to go according to plan, though. Book / 132 pages / 31 illustrations

My Brother, My Mother, My Doll

By Joe Six-Pack. Seven year old Amelia has made a wish. A wish that she had a mother more like her doll, and that her brother weren't so mean. Her family is about to have their lives turned inside-out. Book / 109 pages / 34 illustrations

The Princess Center

By Cheryl Lynn. Jeffrey wanted everything his brother Alan had. He was willing to to any length to get it, even to send Alan to... The Princess Center. Book / 85 pages / 26 illustrations

Tales of Transformation

He's the Wrong Girl

"Office Chemistry" by Joe Six-Pack. James had to fill in at the reception desk. Problem is, the business is a bio-genetics company. And all of the sudden the coffee tastes funny. Book / 53 pages / 14 illustrations

City Boy, Country Girl

By Joe Six-Pack. Richard's successful city life is interrupted when a sheep he wants to fleece needs urgent care out in the country. But instead of returning home, all Richard's wife hears are a series of suspicious excuses. Revised in 2019. Book / 92 pages / 34 illustrations

Thames Greene

By James J Craft. Ira wanted something better for his family. A new start. But in Thames Greene, everyone's getting a new start, whether they want it or not. Book / 77 pages / 26 illustrations

Hiding in High Heels

"How Not to be a Sissy" By Joe Six-Pack. Vince was on the run from people who wanted their millions back. Howard was a friend with a funny little idea and a knack for making subliminal CDs. Mini-Pix / 48 pages / 15 illustrations

A Blessing in Disguise

By KK, illustrations by Kannel. Jay was a witness to a murder, and now he's the target of a vicious criminal. Resorting to a female disguise, he becomes trapped with no way out. Book / 84 pages / 16 illustrations

I'm Your Dolly

"Barbie-in-a-Box" By Joe Six-Pack. Tyler wasn't much of a boyfriend anymore. Jessica wanted to throw him out, but then a better idea came to her, in the form of the Barbie-in-a-Box service. Tyler better get used to pink. Book / 103 pages / 20 illustrations

Winning is Everything

"Costume drama" by Joe Six-Pack. Seth made a funny little bet for Halloween. He needed to pull off the impersonation of a Cheerleader for a party. What's at stake? 100 million dollars and his manhood. Book / 215 pages / 37 illustrations

His Life as a Trophy Wife

By Joe Six-Pack. Nick had a great life, but then it evaporated. Now he's down on his luck. In steps a wealthy executive willing to pay him handsomely to pretend to be his wife. What can it hurt? Revised in 2018. Book / 256 pages / 39 illustrations

Male Monday, Girl Friday

"Hey, Cutie!" by James J Craft. Daniel is going to be promoted from his average life to an exciting executive position. At least, that's what his bosses are telling him. They may not be telling him everything. Book / 58 pages / 20 illustrations

The Happiest Place on Earth

From the files of TGStories.com: "The Fairest One of All" By Joe Six-Pack. Will is a kid looking for a job. He gets one, performing as Snow White at a theme park. For Will, he doesn't suspect that playing the role and wearing the costume is slowly changing him, day by day. Book / 51 pages / 21 illustrations

Hello, Nurse

From the files of TGStories.com: "Quality Health Care". Dane is filling in as a nurse for his pal Jimmy at his new office. Although both are doctors, Dane begins to take to his new role as a nurse. Soon, he feels compelled to be the ideal nurse. Book / 44 pages / 15 illustrations

My Boss, The Bimbo

"If I Were a Betting (Wo)Man" By James J Craft, illustrations by blackshirtboy. CEO Lucas has a superiority complex. When his long-suffering secretary is able to feed into Lucas' competitive nature, he'll make any bet to prove his dominance over women. Book / 38 pages / 10 illustrations

He's the Girl They Want

"Rallies" by Joe Six-Pack. Spencer has a great new executive job in the food service industry, but first he's got to learn the ropes of the business by waiting on tables. He just doesn't quite fit in with the cheerleader theme. Yet. Book / 63 pages / 22 illustrations

Demoted and Degraded

"Trixie the Secretary" by Angela J. Cindy didn't much like Tom Jones attitude and his advances, so when she has the opportunity to help take the wind out of his sails, she takes it. But she had no idea that it was all designed to make Tom into Trixie the secretary. Book / 87 pages / 17 illustrations

I, Candy

"Sissy Sweets" by James J Craft, illustrations by rocketxpert. Inheriting his family's bakery requires this young man to become the new face of the business. A female face. Book / 45 pages / 15 illustrations

Boyz II Girlz

"The Making of the Ballroom Brats" by Joe Six-Pack. The Ballroom Brats become the newest worldwide celebrity sensation. How did four unsuspecting guys at a fast food joint become the hottest girl group in music? Book / 113 pages / 34 illustrations

His Strangest Desire

"Employee of the Month" by Joe Six-Pack. Mick is declared Employee of the Month, and he's going to find himself hurtling headlong into facing his weirdest inner desire. Book / 59 pages / 19 illustrations

Hard Time or High Heels

"I'm Turning into My Mother" by James J Craft, illustrations by rocketxpert. Colby got deep into debt to a local gangster. Before long, he's on the arm of that very same gangster as his reluctant girlfriend. Book / 75 pages / 20 illustrations

Seriously Skirted

"The Show Piece" by KK. Illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Mel finds work at a clinic as a secretary. He slowly begins to fit to role. Book / 75 pages / 19 illustrations

From Mister to Sister

Story by Melissa N., illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Dan just wanted to help guide his girlfriend's sister out of her depression. Instead, he's being guided out of his manhood. Book / 84 pages / 24 illustrations

The Russian Girl

Story by Melissa N., illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Casey's wife has had enough of watching him kill himself with work, so she forces him out of his comfort zone... Into the life of a female stripper. Book / 196 pages / 30 illustrations

Swindled into Skirts

"Beta Male" by Joe Six-Pack. Kyle inherited a multi-million dollar mansion in southern California. He begins to adjust to the Cali lifestyle, but his adjustments seems to have a decidedly feminine flavor to them. Book / 78 pages / 23 illustration

Mergers & Acquisitions

Story by James J. Craft, Illustrations by Sortimid. Mark is a disaffected retail salesperson, and after a takeover of his store, he finds himself selling feminine fashion... and struggling to embrace everything about it. Book / 103 pages / 31 illustration

Suddenly a Secretary

Story & art by Joe Six-Pack. Rock guitarist Mick has become obsessed with following the life of secretary Lori Chandler through her inter-office email messages. Soon, Mick is taking her place. Book / 133 pages / 30 illustrations

Stories of the Supernatural

A Change for the Better

"Do-Overs" by Joe Six-Pack. Evan wants a chance to do over his biggest mistake. He gets the chance, but he keeps wanting his new life to be a little bit better than the last. Book / 59 pages / 18 color illustrations

Changed and Rearranged

"Wrongs Make Wright" By Joe Six-Pack. Chris and Matt were rivals. Then, Matt decided to show everyone how smart he truly was by impersonating a teacher. But the disguise becomes more and more real, much to Chris' dismay. Book / 74 pages / 19 illustrations

From Pals to Gals

From the files of TGStories.com: "Mandate of the People" By Joe Six-Pack. Teens Jeremy and Stewart are good friends, but a bit thick in the noggin. When they jokingly nominate each other for Prom Queen, they slowly become the perfect candidates, thanks to some magic. Book / 45 pages / 16 illustrations

A High-Heeled Halloween

Story & art by Joe Six-Pack. A costume shop has four spooky tales to tell this Halloween, where the price you pay for your costume is far more than money. Book / 128 pages / 34 illustrations

Born on Black Friday

Story & art by Joe Six-Pack. Malcom Balford was forced to go shopping on Black Friday. What he finds at the mall may mean that Malcom will never leave. Book / 57 pages / 17 illustrations.

In the Family Way

Story & Art by Joe Six-Pack. The Finch brothers are trying to catfish a man out of his money. To do so, they dress up as mother and daughter. But their impersonations slowly seem to be taking them over. Book / 182 pages / 42 illustrations

Crossed Fiction

Sisters for the Summer

"Camp Counseling" By Joe Six-Pack. Brock McCade always thought of himself as a real man, or at least he would be one, someday. After summer camp, he's no longer so sure. Book / 76 pages / 17 illustrations

They're the Girls for the Job

"Peace and Harmony" By James J Craft. Illustrations by blackshirtboy. Pete and Harmon need jobs bad. How far would they have to go to get them? Book / 64 pages / 19 illustrations

Blondie's Lost Summer

By KK. Illustrations by Fraylim. Carl's dream summer was about to become three months of dresses, heels and makeup. Book / 159 pages / 48 illustrations

Blondie's Lost Year

By KK. Illustrations by Fraylim. Book Two in the Blondie Series. Carl's trip to Florida has been horrible enough, trapped in dresses and makeup. Now, high school has presented a whole new level of humiliation for him. Book / 221 pages / 52 illustrations

Blondie He's Not

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Mark got a job at a salon, and fell in love with one of the customers. Problem was that customer was Candi "Blondie" Wethers, and what happened to Candi was about to happen to Mark. Book / 151 pages / 40 illustrations

I Never Wanted to be a Woman

"Politically Corrected" By Cheryl Lynn.

Illustrations by Joe Six-Pack. Michael's politically active mother has decided she's going to make her hippie son over into the daughter she always wanted. Book / 64 pages / 19 illustrations

If the Shoes Fit

"Hand Me Downs" By KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Sydney is a teen who is just trying to make it through the summer with no money. He finds himself wearing hand-me-downs from his sister, and that takes his life in a whole new direction. Book / 98 pages / 30 illustrations

The Boy's Guide to Girlhood

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Dweeb Kenny and cool Rex find themselves trapped in a Principal's twisted scheme, and only one of them is going to get out in tact. Book / 109 pages / 32 illustrations

Fashion Victims

Story by Lauren Bliss, illustrations by Fraylim. Teenage boy Jamie just needed clothes for school. Oh, he's going to get clothes for school. Just not male ones. Will he ever need male clothes again? Book / 67 pages / 26 illustrations

The Boy's Guide to Girlhood

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Dweeb Kenny and cool Rex find themselves trapped in a Principal's twisted scheme, and only one of them is going to get out in tact. Book / 109 pages / 32 illustrations

The Making of a Beach Bunny

Story by KK & Fraylim, illustrations by Fraylim. Before heading off to college, John wanted to spend his last normal summer at the old rental summer house with his friend Stanley. There was nothing about this summer that would be normal. Book / 134 pages / 58 illustrations

Medical Miss-Practice

Story by KK & Fraylim, illustrations by Fraylim. Jerry just needed a medical procedure. He came out with two big new problems and a whole new life. Now he's losing everything he loves, piece by piece. Book / 95 pages / 51 black & white illustrations

12 Days of Christmas

Story by KK, illustrations by Fraylim. Paul was a rising executive, but he had a secret embezzlement scheme. Now he's being blackmailed into skirts day-by-day in the 12 days of Christmas. Book / 74 pages / 21 illustrations

Seriously Sissified

A Family Femmed

"The Femmed Family Robinson" by James J. Craft & Cheryl Lynn, illustrations by Sortimid. The Robinson boys all had dreams of their own, once. Now they have new ones, thanks to their stepmother. Book /96 pages / 29 color illustrations

Forever Femmed

Story by James J. Craft & Cheryl Lynn, illustrations by Sortimid. "A Family Femmed's" Deborah is still hard at work, flipping men into sissies and selling them to the highest bidder. But this time, there's a new wrinkle. Book / 108 pages / 28 illustrations

Auntie's Girl Time

By Cheryl Lynn. David was just a young teenage boy who wanted all the things in life a man could look forward to. His aunt, though, is going to make sure he never gets them. Book / 79 pages / 20 illustrations

Revenge of the Cheerleaders

"Pansy Cheers" By Angela J. Patrick Sears was a football player trying to sleep with every cheerleader at his small college. He'd have to pay for his conquests. Book / 116 pages / 19 illustrations

He's Got His Mind Maid Up

By James J. Craft. Illustrations by kinkyrocket. Corey has just a sliver of a chance to get into college, but that chance involves becoming his stepmother's maid. And she wants him to fit both the role and the dress. Book / 68 pages / 16 illustrations

Fated for Femininity

Story by KK, illustrations by RocketXpert. When a web page shows Evan having sex with another boy, the poor kid is chased out of town — right into the arms of a gender therapist who has her own agenda. Book / 70 pages / 15 illustrations

Un-Boxed & Undone

By James J. Craft, illustrations by Banedearg with additional art by Joe Six-Pack. Caleb is struggling to get his YouTube career started. When he gets some strange shipments of makeup and clothes, he finds his channel suddenly taking off - but can he control it? A picture story. Book / 41 Pages / 33 illustrations

Web Classics Revisited

Two Forms of ID

By Joe Six-Pack. Harvey had the unusual ability to convincingly imitate a teenage girl. In desperation, he has to use that talent to make some money. But when is enough enough? Paperback / 194 pages / text only

Barbie's Life

Story & Art by Melissa N. Chris was a student actor who said he could play any role. A disgruntled girlfriend and playwright are about to see if he'll be able to play the lead role in... Barbie's Life. Book / 55 pages / 21 rendered images

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Sold in three parts:

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Working His Way into Skirts (Part 2)

He Gave at the Office (Part 3)

I'm Your Dolly (Barbie-in-a-Box)

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Destined to be a Doll (Part 2)

I'm Your Dolly (Part 3)

Beta Male

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Hijacked into Heels (Part 2)

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Becoming His Costume (Part 1)

Stuck in His Costume (Part 2)

Corrupted by His Costume (Part 3)

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Born to be a Bride (Part 1)

He's the Bride to Be (Part 2)

The Substitute Ski Bunny (Switchback Ridge)

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The Fairest One of All

Sold in one part

