

# Makes You Feel Old

By ChronoEclipse

Hannah and her friend Samantha were walking back to the student parking lot giggling and chatting about their afternoon classes as they headed home from campus.

“OOoo I almost forgot! Today is National Silly Dance day. I wanted to post something up on TikTok.” Hannah said to her friend, whipping out her phone out of her back pocket.

“National Silly Dance day?” Samantha asked with a laugh.

Hannah nodded enthusiastically.

“Yeah you want to do one with me? Come on!” The 25-year-old grad student encouraged her friend to join her.

Hannah propped her phone up to a nearby ledge and the two young women did an impromptu dance together. A few guys nearby whistled at the ladies as they swiveled their hips and shook their curves. The girls replied by sticking out their tongues and laughing as Hannah stopped the video.

“That’s going to be fire!” Hannah giggled, red-in-the-face as she quickly began to edit it as they continued walking.

“We don’t look corny and lame in that video right?” Samantha asked, needing reassurance.

Hannah shook her head vehemently.

“Hard no. We look hot! I mean look at all the guys that were checking us out while we did it.” Hannah said gesturing at the college guys that were still grinning and nodding in approval as the girls walked by.

“Yeah fair, totally fair... I just got this weird thought as we were dancing that if my mom did that I would literally die of embarrassment!” Samantha explained.

“Yeah that’s because she’s a frumpy over-the-hill woman, no offense, and we’re literally attractive college girls – anything we do is inherently trendy babe.” Hannah reassured her friend.

“You’re right! So anyway... I’m starting my first student teaching gig at a new school next month!” Samantha announced excitedly.

“Congratulations! Where at?” Hannah asked.

“Oh at Stiffler Memorial Middle School down the road!” Samantha replied.

Hannah smirked at her friend.

“The local junior high? Those 8th grade boys are going to lose their shit when you walk into the classroom! They won’t be able to think straight.” Hannah joked.

“Oh yeah – I zoomed with the Principal yesterday and she was telling me like no to unbutton any of the buttons on my blouses and wear skirts that go below the knees. I thought she was just a total prude at first, but now that you mention that I’ll be teaching classes of pubescent tween kids I kind of get what she was worried about...” Samantha admitted looking at her attractive curvy young body.

Hannah’s phone began to vibrate.

“Oops hang on one second someone’s... calling me for some reason. Oh my god, it’s Professor Hoffsteder, my advisor. I’ve got to get this!” Hannah said, scrambling to answer the call.

“Hiiii! Professor Hoffsteder?” Hannah asked into her cell.

“Hannah! I’m so glad I caught you! I have a bit of a favor... a largish favor actually and I was wondering if you’d be up for helping me.” The professor said on the other end of the call.

“Sure! What’s up?” Hannah asked nonchalantly though she was dying to know what kind of favor her faculty advisor would be calling her in a panic about in the middle of the day.

“I was just offered a speaking engagement at a conference last minute and would need to fly out this evening and be gone overnight. The thing is that I don’t want to leave my daughter, Ruby, home by herself right now... She’s 13 so it’s not like she really *needs* a babysitter, she’s just going through a bit of a hard time and I think it would be better for her if she wasn’t left alone... she seemed to take a real liking to you when you came over for the school year kick-off party I hosted last semester, so I was wondering if you would be willing to come stay with her. I know this is last minute and you probably have lots of fun exciting things already planned but on the off chance that you are available I would compensate you handsomely for the work!” He explained long-windedly.

“Oh. Oh wow, your daughter Ruby. Yeah sure, I can come over and watch her.” Hannah offered, surprised.

“You can? Oh that’s terrific news. Thank you so much Hannah. This is really a huge weight off my shoulders.” Professor Hoffsteder said through the phone.

“No prob. Happy to help. I’ll be over at 7... yeah I remember where you live. Cool cool. See you then. Bye.” Hannah said, hanging up the phone.

“Oooooo! Sounds like Hannahs going to go spend the night at a professors house...” Samantha teased like there was something scandalous and juicy about it.

“Shut up! It’s Professor Hoffsteder’s house. He’s like in his 50s!... He wants me to babysit his daughter while he goes out of town. Get your mind out of the gutter. You’re the one that’s into old men with dad-bods. Not me.” Hannah said playfully shoving her friend as they got to their cars.

Samantha laughed and shook her head in a 'ah you got me there' kind of way.

"I'm just saying - if I were you I'd totally take the opportunity to open his underwear drawer and sneak a peek at what he wears under those dress pants!" Samantha joked with a wink.

"Don't be gross... meetup this weekend and head down to the beach? I just bought a new bikini I want to break in." Hannah said, hopping into her car.

"You know it! See ya then! Have fun babysitting!" Samantha said, pointing her finger at her friend and winking as she got into her own car.

Hannah headed home and took a hot shower, then changed into a comfortable tank-top, jean shorts and sneakers. She texted her boyfriend letting him know that she had a babysitting gig tonight so she wouldn't be online.

'You know what babysitters always do in movies right...' He texted her with a winky emoji.

'Get murdered?' She texted back with a smirking emoji.

She finished packing her overnight bag and headed off to her Professor's house. The older man opened the door and his face brightened with appreciation at the sight of his young student.

"Hannah! Thanks again. This truly is a godsend." Professor Hoffsteder said as he ushered her into his home.

He wasn't an unattractive man. He was tall and thin with a neatly trimmed salt-and-pepper beard and a balding head of brown hair that was graying at the sideburns. Any woman over 40 would certainly think that the Professor was a real catch - brainy and handsome like a character from a Dan Brown novel. But the fact that he was twice Hannah's age was enough for her to not even consider thinking about him in that context.

“It’s really my pleasure. Ruby’s a really sweet kid.” Hannah said, shrugging as she plopped her bag down next to the professor’s couch.

“Yes she is... as I mentioned on the phone, she’s been having a bit of a hard time. She found a box of her mother’s belongings up in the attic and it naturally stirred up a lot of feelings.” Hoffsteder confided in a hushed tone.

“Oh wow, I can only imagine. How old was Ruby when your wife passed away, if you don’t mind me asking?” Hannah inquired as politely as possible.

The professor adjusted his glasses and looked very solemn.

“Ruby was just a baby when she passed away. Too young to have many memories of her mother. It’s a hard thing to process – the loss of a parent, even for someone my age. But for a young girl like Ruby... she’s a very bright girl, as you know but her emotional maturity is really that of a child much younger than her age.” He admitted.

“Well, I’ll do my best to keep things fun and light. I can keep her entertained and maybe distract her from all of that other stuff while you’re gone.” Hannah said with a smile.

“That’s great, that’s really great Hannah. Just make sure that she also gets her homework done. Ooo I lost track of the time. I’d better get going if I’m going to catch my plane. I’ll be back flying back right after the speaking engagement in the morning.” He said, checking his watch.

The professor moved over to the stairwell.

“Ruby! Ruby honey! Hannah is here. I have to head out.” He called up the stairs.

A freckle-faced tween appeared at the top of the steps and ran downstairs waving to the young woman standing with her father.

“Hi Hannah!” She said brightly with a full mouth of braces.

“Hey kiddo. I’m looking forward to hanging out with you tonight.” Hannah said cheerily.

“Me too! It’s going to be so much fun!” Ruby beamed.

“Okay I’ve got to skiddaddle so come give me a hug.” The professor said holding his arms out to his daughter.

She ran up and gave the man a big hug.

“Have a safe flight daddy. Don’t do anything embarrassing at the conference.” Ruby told him as she squeezed him tightly.

“Hey! Your daddy doesn’t do anything embarrassing does he?” Hoffsteder asked with a smirk.

“Yes! Like all of the time!” Ruby replied seriously.

The professor looked over at his young adult student to back him up. Hannah shrugged and smirked.

“It’s not your fault, professor. You’re old. It just makes whatever you do or any jokes you tell inherently embarrassing.” She explained, giving a wink to the tween.

Professor Hoffsteder frowned playfully.

“Wow Hannah thanks a lot! Okay well this old square guy needs to catch a plane. Don’t be afraid to call me if you need anything though!” He said as he grabbed his briefcase.

Hannah waved him off as he rushed out the door, glad he didn’t try to hug her goodbye or anything. Ruby grabbed Hannah’s hand and led her up to her bedroom. Hannah looked around smiling at the colorful decor, it reminded her a lot of how her room had looked when she was back in middle-school 12 years ago.

The tween plopped down on her bed and invited the 25-year-old to come and sit on the bed with her. Hannah slipped off her sneakers and climbed up, effortlessly curling her legs up cross-legged under her as she sat next to the younger girl. She noticed a tear-drop pendant hanging around the middle-schoolers slender neck with a red gem in the center of it.

“Ooo I like your necklace. That’s a ruby isn’t it. Just like your name!” Hannah remarked, reaching out to lift the pendant away from the girl’s chest in order to get a closer look at it.

“Yep! I found it in the attic. It used to be my moms.” Ruby said proudly.

“Very cool. It’s nice that you have this piece of hers. My mom gave me some of her old jewelry like this when I was your age and I’ve always cherished it.” Hannah said.

“I wish I had a mom like you.” Ruby said out of nowhere.

“Like me? Aw kiddo, I can’t be your mom. I’m not much older than you! When you were born I wasn’t even old enough to have kids yet.” Hannah said, a little freaked out at even the prospect of it.

“Yeah but-” Ruby began to respond.

“I can’t be your mom. But for tonight I'm your babysitter... or, not even that really because you’re not a baby. You’re a grown girl! So how about we’re just good friends, keeping each other company?” Hannah suggested.

“Okay...” Ruby replied, pouting a little.

“What do you want to do tonight? I’m down for anything - we could watch some movies, or have a dance party, or get really girly and do mani-pedis...” Hannah said as she tugged her sock off and wiggled her toes to reveal chipping nail polish. “I could seriously use a pedicure, like - for real.” She said giggling.

“All of it!” Ruby declared happily.

“You want to do it all? That’s a pretty packed night... but I guess we could probably do it all if we skipped doing your homework for the evening...” Hannah said with a wink.

‘Coolest. Babysitter. Ever.’ Hannah thought to herself proudly.

“Yes! Okay I’m going to go use the bathroom and then I’ll meet you downstairs to pick out the movies!” Ruby squealed excitedly.

Hannah fist-bumped the girl and grabbed her discarded sock and sneakers and headed down to the living room. Hopping onto the couch, she tugged off her other sock and stuffed it into her sneaker and slipped them under the coffee table as she stretched out bare-legged across the seat.

She pulled out her phone and decided to quickly facetime her boyfriend. The 20-something guy quickly showed up on the screen.

“Hey sexy, how’s babysitting going?” He asked.

“Oh I’m killing it as a babysitter. I’m going to totally wear her out with everything I have planned and get her to pass out by midnight... so if you wanted to swing by then...” Hannah said coyly, as she made a flirty face into the phone.

“Yeah? And what activities do you have planned for us when I come over?” He asked with a knowing grin.

“Well...You can start by giving me a nice, juicy, foot massage and then we can work up to... other things...” She giggled coquettishly as she tilted her phone to flash the boy her cute dainty feet and then traveled the camera up her long smooth legs to her crotch and then back up her trim waist and perky breasts in her top all the way back to her pretty face.

“Yeah I'm 100% down for that!” The boy said enthusiastically.

Hannah heard the bathroom door upstairs open.



“Okay but I don’t want Professor Hoffsteder to know I had you over so just like, knock on the window on the front porch and I’ll sneak you in at midnight? Kay? \*Mwah!\*” She said, kissing the camera on her phone and then hanging up as Ruby ran down the stairs.

“I’m back! Did you pick out some movies to watch?” The middle-school girl asked her as she bounced into the living room.

Hannah shook her head.

“Nah I wasn’t going to pick without your input. I wouldn’t do you like that. Okay so it looks like your dad subscribes to basically every streaming service imaginable. I guess it’s just a matter of picking what we want to watch! What are your favorite movies?” Hannah asked.

Ruby considered the question for a moment as she hopped up on the couch to sit next to the grad-student.

“I LOVE LOVE LOVE Hamilton! And I really liked Dear Evan Hansen! Oh and the new Cinderella - I’ve watched that like a million times.” She replied.

“Sweet sounds like you’re a big fan of Broadway films and Disney.” Hannah observed.

“Okay - random question! If someone was going to make a movie about your life - who would play you? My answer is Millie Bobby Brown!” Ruby said passionately.

Rachel smirked at the girl's energy and enthusiasm.

“Hmmm that’s a good question. I have to think about it for a second.” Hannah replied.

“I know who would be PERFECT for you - Amy Adams!” Ruby exclaimed, flourishing her hands to illustrate how perfect the idea was.

“Wow well, she’s definitely really pretty – wait, do you mean she’d play me now?” Hannah asked, suddenly realizing what the girl meant.

Ruby nodded with a smile. Hannah responded with a wide-eyed shaking of her head.

“Nooo she’s way too old to play me! How old do you think I am? She’s like, the mom in that Evan Hansen movie isn’t she?” Hannah asked.

Ruby nodded again.

“I’m only 25. Amy Adams is like twenty years older than me... Anya Taylor Joy would be a much better fit. She’s at least my age.” Hannah explained.

“She’s the lady from that chess show right? She’s good too, I guess... Let’s go back to picking movies.” Ruby suggested.

“Sure. Hmmm what’s something that I bet you’d like. I mean, there’s always the Twilight movies but I bet you’ve seen those a million times too.” Hannah said, thinking.

Ruby shook her head with a smile.

“Nope. What are they about?” The young girl asked.

Hannah’s jaw dropped.

“You’ve never seen the Twilight films? I was OBSESSED with them when I was your age. You haven’t read the books either?” Hannah asked in shock.

Rudy shrugged.

“No I don’t think so, maybe they were read to me when I was a baby like those old Harry Potter books, but I don’t remember.” The girl replied.

Hannah was dumbfounded, she felt like she was in the twilight zone. She had never met anyone under the age of 40 who hadn’t watched all of the Harry

Potter and Twilight films and voraciously read all of the books when they were growing up.

“The Harry Potter books aren’t old... neither are the Twilight books. They all came out like in our lifetimes.” Hannah insisted.

Ruby shook her head and shrugged again.

“Not my lifetime...” She said softly. The necklace around her neck seemed to glow a bit.

Hannah was busy searching on her phone so she didn’t notice.

“You’re 13 so you were born in 2008 and the Twilight movie came out in... 2008...” Hannah said, sounding immediately deflated by this revelation. “And the last Harry Potter book came out in... 2007!?! That’s insane! I remember waiting in line at Borders for my copy at the release day party.” Hannah said softly.

She suddenly felt very old. Normally she always saw herself as just another young kid. Her friends would complain about ‘quarter life crisis’ or feeling ‘old’ since they were now a couple years out of undergrad but Hannah had never really felt like that. But the realization that her beloved book series and movie franchise from her adolescence had all come out before the young woman in front of her (who was technically a teenager!) had even been *born*, caused Hannah to suddenly feel ancient! She might as well put in for her social security check and room at the nursing home now – because her youth was over!

And as she felt that, things began to subtly shift in her memory. Grad school moved into the rear view mirror in her mind as she began thinking about her PhD and then her new job in the admin department at the university. Feint lines crept up on either side of her still plump lips and crinkles began to form in the corners of her eyes. She had turned the big 3-0 earlier this year which wasn’t as bad as she had feared it would be. She was still young – relatively. Most days she could pass for and even convince herself that she was in her 20s,

unless there was a precocious tween rubbing in the fact that Hannah had been born way back during the first Bush administration!

“What’s a Borders?” Ruby asked.

“Oh god. Haha, you’re making me feel old now! They were a chain of bookstores... like Amazon but a physical store you could go to. They all closed down a few years ago.” Hannah explained as she shifted to sit properly on the couch.

She tugged at the hem of her jean shorts, frowning at the dimples of visible cellulite on her exposed thighs.

“And you went there to buy the Harry Potter books when they first came out?” Ruby asked like she was hearing about a piece of history.

Hannah smirked and nodded.

“Yeah my friends in high school and I went together to wait in line for the pre-release of the last book - it was a lot of fun!” Hannah assured Ruby.

Ruby raised an eyebrow skeptically.

“Okay, let’s get back to figuring out what movie we’re going to watch... Ooo you know what movie I loved in middle school? The Notebook!... Or another fun one was 13 Going on 30.” Hannah suggested.

“13 Going on 30?” Ruby asked curiously.

“Yeah it was like my favorite movie to watch with my friends when I was your age... huh, I was 13 when that movie came out and now I’m 30!” Hannah said in realization.

Ruby looked at her wide-eyed.

“You’re 30!?” She gasped and then quickly covered her mouth.

“Yeah it’s crazy to think about isn’t it?” Hannah said, shaking her head and wondering where the time had gone.

“Hannah? Are you old enough to be my mom?” Ruby asked.

Hannah burst out laughing at the question and looked at the tween with a smirk and a shake of her head.

“No kiddo! Not unless I had a teen pregnancy. C’mon, stop being silly and let’s get this dance party started!” Hannah said, standing up from the couch.

The 30-year-old woman needed to stretch once she had stood up as her body felt a little stiff from sitting for so long.

“Yay!” Ruby cheered, jumping up off the couch with a lot more energy than her ‘babysitter’ currently had.

Hannah pulled up a music app on her phone and selected an early 2000s playlist and cast it to the sound system. Macklemore’s Thrift Shop began to play and the 30-year-old began to bop her hips and swing her arms to the beat.

Ruby giggled and jumped in, dancing around to the music.

Hannah paused for a moment realizing that there was a lot of swearing and language in the song that might not be appropriate for a tween girl to listen to. She hadn’t really noticed or even considered anything like that before. This was just a song that she had enjoyed back in college. But now she wondered if she should try and find clean versions of the songs.

The next song came on and it was Miley Cyrus’ Party in the U.S.A. Ruby began to clap excitedly and jump up and down to the song. Hannah smiled, relieved that a more age-appropriate tune had come on and resumed dancing herself.

“Oh I love this song! My aunty always tells me that when I was a baby in my crib she’d play this song and I’d start dancing around and wiggling my little diapered butt like Miley.” Ruby said with a nostalgic grin.

Hannah laughed and then realized the implications of the girl's story.

“Wait - you couldn't have been a baby. This song isn't *that* old...” Hannah said trying to remember when this song first came out, it was definitely after Hannah graduated high school...

She began to feel really old again. Kids Ruby's age had never lived in a world where Miley Cyrus wasn't a famous pop star... Suddenly as Hannah danced she felt a bit out of breath. Lines were deepening along her forehead.

“Why? How old were you when this song came out?” Ruby asked with a teasing grin on her face, like she enjoyed rubbing in how much older Hannah was than her.

The 30-something woman wiped some sweat from her neck and shook her head.

“Oh you don't even want to know... It's been on my workout playlist on my ipod for a few years now though.” Hannah admitted.

Her jean shorts were riding up her wider booty as she danced to the music, she kept trying to tug them down wondering if they had shrunk in the wash... she was getting a bit too old for shorts this short anyway...

“What's an Eye-pod? Are they like AirPods but for your eyes?” Ruby asked, sounding curious.

Hannah blinked at the middle-school girl.

“No like... an iPod. You know, iPods, iPod mini... iPod nano... iPod shuffle...” Hannah replied, feeling older and older as each item she listed was met with blank stares from her young charge.

She felt like the “Sure, Grandma, let's get you to bed” meme. Her lower back was starting to ache a bit and dancing was really wearing her out. An Outkast song came on.

“After this can we put on some music that isn’t oldies?” Ruby asked.

Hannah was distracted by dismay at how her developing muffin top was pooching out a little from under her top.

“What?... Outkast isn’t oldies!” She exclaimed in disbelief.

And just like that she was 35.

Crows feet were now visible in the corners of her eyes and her chest was beginning to slope a bit in her bra. She continued to sway her wider hips and bop around as she remembered the song playing at her high school prom.

In her mind she had been working as an admin at the university for several years now and became close work colleagues and good friend’s with Ruby’s dad, who had been her advisor when she had gone to grad school here ten years ago.

“How about something like Lil Nas X?” Ruby suggested, using Hannah’s phone to change the music.

Hannah put her veinier hands on her wider hips and smirked at the young girl.

“Isn’t he the rapper that did that disgusting music video?” She asked judgmentally.

8 months ago when the music video had dropped and Hannah had been a 24-year-old grad student instead of a mature woman in her mid-30s, she had thought that Lil Nas X was amazing and that his video was “the shit”. But at her current age she really didn’t get it or see the appeal of the artist.

An f-bomb dropped in the song and the exhausted woman used it as an excuse to call a quits.

“Okay, dance party’s over. Time to do your homework!” Hannah announced.

Her voice was also beginning to get a bit lower and more mature sounding. She sounded more intimidating than she had when her voice had been high-pitched and giggly.

“Nooo please can we do one more fun thing before I have to do my homework?” Ruby begged and made a pouty face.

Secretly the girl was thrilled by the idea that Hannah had aged to the point where she had forgotten the plan to let her slide on the school work for the night.

Hannah sighed and smiled at the 13-year-old girl.

“Okay one more thing. We can go upstairs and paint each other’s nails but while we’re working on our pedicures we should talk through your homework so you can get it done quick enough for us to watch a couple movies before you have to go to bed.” Hannah told the girl as she put a hand on Ruby’s skinny back and ushered her toward the stairs.

“Did we pick what movies we’re going to watch yet?” The girl asked, looking up at the more mature face of her babysitter.

“Oh I have some great ideas. There are a bunch of amazing movies that came out back when I was your age. Have you ever seen Never Been Kissed or 10 Things I Hate About You?” Hannah asked as they headed upstairs.

Ruby shook her head.

“No, are they in color?” The girl asked only half joking.

Hannah looked offended at first and then smirked at Ruby as she followed her up the stairs, reaching up to playfully tickle the girls' sides.

“Oh you little... not every movie from the 20th century was in black and white! I’m not that old!” She said as she chased the girl up the stairs.

Ruby giggled and squealed, squirming to avoid getting tickled by Hannah as



she hurried up the stairs and then jumped onto her bed. She crawled across her bed to the drawer next to her bed and opened it up to pull out a beauty kit geared toward teen girls.

Hannah padded over to the bed and sat down on the mattress with a bit of a grunt due to the sore back she had gained from dancing so much. She picked up the kit and looked at the nail polish.

“Mmm the colors are all a bit bolder and brighter than a woman my age normally wears...” She said reluctantly. The frowning face she was making caused the new creases on her jaw line to deepen.

“Aww you look so cute and hot with this orange!” Ruby insisted, pulling it out of the bag.

Hannah smirked at the practically neon nail polish. Finally she shrugged.

“Eh what the heck. Sure!” She said, causing Ruby to clap excitedly.

The adult women took the girls legs onto her lap and began to administer the quick and easy pedicure as they began to chat about life - What Ruby's into nowadays: Musical Theatre; What she wants to be when she grows up: An actress; What her friends are up to: Her BFF Danica's family just adopted a new puppy and finally: Boys.

“So it sounds like you really wanted to be partnered up with this boy Jayden for the science project... Do you like him?” Hannah asked with a grin. She found the idea of middle-school crushes to be adorable.

Ruby blushed as Hannah finished painting her toes and moved on to her hands.

“I don't know... maybe... he's just like... really funny and he has nice eyes... and... um...” The girl sputtered in embarrassment.

“That's okay. Funny and nice eyes are good enough reasons to like someone! And you don't have to be anything more than friends with boys you like.

Remember that.” Hannah said, giving Ruby a serious look as she painted her fingernails.

The tween nodded and then got a mischievous smile on her face.

“Are there any boys you like...?” The tween asked the 35-year-old.

Hannah sighed and smiled. She had seen that question coming.

“I mean, none that I want to be science project partners with... when you get to be my age half the battle is just finding guys that are actually single.” Hannah admitted with a sigh.

Her boyfriend was not nothing more than a flirty grad student who she occasionally felt flattered by when he said something complimentary to her in passing.

“My dad’s single...” Ruby said in almost a sing-songy tone.

Hannah’s mouth opened, unsure what to say as she looked at the young girl who was attempting to pimp out her widower father.

“Oh well... honey... I think I'm a little too young for your dad... you know. I mean, I'm 35 so... to him that would be like me dating a high school boy or you dating someone who isn't even born yet...” Hannah explained gently.

Ruby frowned but nodded. Hannah finished with the girl's hands and then lifted her own foot up onto the bed and began to work on it.

“Let’s talk about your homework. What do you have to do?” Hannah said changing the subject before the girl pressed some more.

“Well... I have to watch a stupid half hour documentary for history class...” Ruby said.

“That’s great we’ll add that to our movie marathon.” Hannah suggested.

“And I have to complete a page of math problems.” Ruby added.

“That’ll be no sweat because I know for a fact that you’re a whiz at math!” Hannah said with a grin as she reached over and booped the girl on the nose.

Ruby smiled and blushed, appreciating the compliment and the affection.

“And finally, I have to come up with an event that happened in my lifetime that changed the way we view the world and give a speech about it in class.” Ruby explained.

“Great. Do you know what your topic is going to be?” Hannah asked.

Ruby shrugged.

“I don’t know. I was thinking about just doing it on the pandemic.” The girl offered.

Hannah furrowed her brow and shook her head.

“Honey, that just happened last year... I mean it’s not even over. Everyone in your class is probably going to be doing there’s on the pandemic. You can think of a better topic than that.” Hannah encouraged the girl.

Ruby shrugged.

“Like what?” She asked.

Hannah pursed her thinner lips as she thought about major events in recent years.

“Ooo how about President Obama getting elected! You know... Right after I graduated I volunteered for his campaign! So I could give you a bit of the ‘inside scoop’!” Hannah suggested.

Ruby shook her head.

“No, I have to do it on something that happened in my lifetime.” Ruby reiterated.

Hannah paused, confused.

“Right... Obama’s election...” Hannah began to say.

“Happened the month before I was born...” Ruby finished.

Hannah paused trying to do that math, shaking her head in denial.

“No Ruby, he was just the last president we had... or... I guess he was two presidents ago now...” Hannah said suddenly feeling the passage of time hit her once more.

“I guess I could technically do his inauguration... I was like a few weeks old when that happened...” Ruby suggested.

Hannah took a deep breath. She had been an adult when Obama had been elected - a young adult, maybe, but still an adult and now here was this girl who was old enough to date boys who wasn’t even a month old at the time of his first inauguration!

The older woman resumed painting her toenails to try and distract herself from the feelings of her youth passing her by. As she did so her toes began to look a bit boxier and much less dainty and delicate than they had when she had first taken off her sneakers. A bunion formed on the side of her foot. She’d have to go to the podiatrist to get that taken care of if she hoped to wear flip-flops any time soon. Veins bulged from the tops of her formerly smooth feet and her slender calves and ankles began to bloat and swell into the thick cankles of a middle-aged woman.

Her thighs softened from years of skipping the gym, the dimpled bottoms of her thighs flattened against the bed as her ass continued to grow in her tiny shorts. Her flabby tummy pooched a little under her shirt and her breasts sank lower down her torso.

A gray hair appeared in her bangs as she began to vividly remember her low-key 40th birthday. She still told people that she was in her 30s but the fact was that she had been born in 1981 and graduated high school before the millennium!

“Are you okay Ms. McCarthy?” Ruby asked, looking at the middle-aged woman’s increasingly lined face.

Hannah sighed and nodded, showing off the slight double chin that had developed under her older face. Luckily the skin only bunched up like that when she tilted her head down. She reached up to rub the looser skin of her neck.

“Oh you know you don’t have to call me that sweetie. You can just call me ‘Hannah’.” The 40-year-old said with a tired smile.

This would have been one of those moments earlier in the night when Hannah would have reiterated that she wasn’t that much older than Ruby, but now saying something like that when there was a 27 year age difference between them felt absurd.

“And I’m fine. Just a bit tired is all. It’s been a long busy week.” Hannah admitted as she continued applying ridiculously bright neon nail polish to her 40-year-old feet.

“Busy doing fun stuff?” Ruby asked.

In reality, yes. Hannah had gone out clubbing with her friends a few nights; her boyfriend and her had done laser tag; she had hit the gym a bunch in preparation for a marathon she was planning to run for fun next month. But instead Hannah remembered her week as:

“Well, I filed my taxes early, so that’s one less thing to worry about! And I’ve been staying late at the office to reorganize our filing system which had been a whole big project! Oh, and on Monday I had to go get my new dental insurance sorted out which was... an ordeal! Ha! And that reminds me I need to go down

to the DMV and get my license renewed. Oof! It never ends. I tell ya..." She said, shaking her head in exasperation.

"Well... at least your toes will be cute!" Ruby said thinking that everything Hannah had just said was boring with a capital 'B'.

"Awww thanks sweetie." Hannah said, mussing the girl's hair playfully.

She wiggled her now bright orange toes which looked a bit absurd on her middle-aged feet. Eh if she felt too embarrassed by the youthful color she could always wear socks until she could get down to a professional pedicurist.

Hannah rubbed her puffy cankle and tisked at some bulging varicose veins that had popped up under her knees. She thought back to her time volunteering during the Obama campaign... no wait, it wasn't Obama... it was Kerry. She had volunteered during John Kerry's campaign back when she was a fresh-faced 24-year-old. She wore short shorts or skirts all the time back then and guys would compliment her on her sexy legs... of course these days guys would get in a lot of trouble for saying those kinds of things to a young volunteer!

"It's no fun getting old." She grunted, shaking her head.

She slid her chunky legs down off of Ruby's bed and moved to stand up but her back was still bothering her a bit. Hannah held out her arm in the air for assistance, again frowning as she noticed the bingo wing forming as her bicep softened into middle-aged flab and dangled downward.

"Give me a hand up, would ya hun?" She asked with a grunt.

Ruby smiled and hopped over the older woman to jump off the bed and grabbed Hannah's veiny hand as she tugged her up to her feet. As Hannah stood up with a groan of discomfort there was a distinct rip in the back of her shorts.

"Uh-oh..." Ruby whispered, cringing and trying not to laugh.

Hannah blushed and her hand shot back to confirm that there was now a huge rip up the seat of her shorts.

“Oh my goodness! I can’t believe that just happened!” The 40-year-old exclaimed in embarrassment.

She stood up straight with one hand trying to cover the rip and her exposed panties while the other hand tugged at her shirt which was revealing a bit too much of her freckled chest and soft tummy.

“I don’t know why in the world I decided to wear this outfit. It hardly fits me anymore and isn’t flattering in the slightest...” She grumbled to herself.

Hannah wasn’t overweight or anything, in fact *for her age* she looked pretty good! But the pesky flab and cellulite that women get as they progress through middle-aged hadn’t been avoided by her and her own busy schedule had made it tough to hit the gym as regularly as she had in her 20s, leaving a pear-shaped woman with cottage-cheese thighs; a bit of a tummy and jiggly arms. She had developed the classic ‘mom-bod’ and she was right, it didn’t look at all flattering in the youthful outfit she had picked out for herself at 25.

“Um there are some clothes you can change into in the box on the floor in my dad’s closet...” Ruby suggested with a sweet, innocent grin.

Hannah looked relieved.

“Fantastic! Thank you so much Ruby. I’ll just dip in there and change... why don’t you get started on your math homework in the meantime so that you can be all finished up and then we can go downstairs and watch some of the movies I used to love when I was your age. Like *Sleepless in Seattle* and *Interview with a Vampire!*” Hannah said as she waddled out of the bedroom.

Ruby nodded and went to go take her math assignment out while Hannah stumbled through the hallway into Professor Hoffsteders bedroom.

The room was pretty sparse and definitely was a middle-aged man’s bedroom. There were a few bookshelves cluttered with books and a few awards on the wall. A framed diploma from the Professor’s alma mater, class of ‘92. The

sheets and curtains were all the kind of functional navy blue that a single man might purchase without much thought.

Hannah was a bit curious, but didn't want to be too nosy in her colleague's private spaces so she just closed the door and slipped off her ripped shorts and then plodded over to the closet. Opening it up she found a box on the floor with a bunch of neatly folded women's clothing. She pulled out a pair of jeans and a button up blouse.

"Hannah?" Ruby called through the door.

The tween girl had taken her math worksheet and textbook and was not sitting on the floor against the wall out in the hall.

"Yeah hun?" Hannah replied as she tugged the too-small top off of her middle-aged torso.

"What year did you graduate college?" Ruby asked.

"Undergrad?... Um, let's see... 2003." Hannah said as she frowned in the mirror at her droopy breasts in her bra.

"Oh wow!" Ruby exclaimed.

"What?" Hannah asked through the door wondering what Ruby had discovered.

"Oh it's just... I'm doing some math and kids who graduated high school this year were *born* the same year you graduated college!" Ruby explained.

"Wait - what?" Hannah gasped as she did the math herself in her head.

Her breasts fattened and sloped a bit more in her hands, beginning to lose their round shape and flop onto her belly if not for her youthful bra.

"Yeah and like, did you know that we're closer to 2050 than we are to 1980?" Ruby asked with a slight giggle.



More gray hair began to sprinkle through Hannah's mane. The creases along her nasal folds deepened.

"That's crazy..." Hannah gasped softly as her voice deepened and matured further into the throaty cadence of a matronly woman.

"I know! Right? And in less time than Schitt's Creek has been on the air - I'll be legally an adult!" Ruby declared giddily.

The room shifted around Hannah as a brighter floral decor replaced a lot of the furnishing. The closet filled with a fair amount of dresses and a women's shoe collection amassed in the bottom of the closet. There were now 'his and hers' nightstands on either side of the bed and the formerly stark walls were decorated with some pretty artwork.

"Hey! Watch the language young lady!" Hannah snapped sternly through the door.

"I wasn't swearing, it's the name of a TV show!" Ruby retorted defensively.

Hannah shook her head causing her sloping cheeks to jiggle a bit.

"Well it sounds like the kind of filth that I don't want you watching!" Hannah grumbled through the door.

The now 45-year-old woman brushed some of her salt-and-pepper hair out of her face and held the blouse she had picked out against her saggy middle-aged chest.

'Huh, my old maternity clothes... why did I take these out?' She mumbled to herself.

She went over to the bed and folded the clothes back up neatly and tucked them back in the box in the closet. Then she rifled through the women's clothes hanging up and pulled out a modest but fashionable blouse.

Hannah then headed over to the dresser drawers. She opened the top one and revealed Professor Hoffsteders underwear - a bunch of neatly rolled plaid printed boxer briefs and some pipe smoking paraphernalia and a baggie that looked like it might be pot or hash, things that he didn't want Ruby to find. Hannah would have been giggling and texting Samantha had she discovered this at the beginning of the night, but now she just shook her head and pressed the palm of her hand to her lined forehead for spacing out on which underwear drawer was hers.

She opened the next drawer down to reveal a jumble of panties and bras. She reached around her pudgy back with a groan and unclasped her current bra which was pinching her uncomfortably and constraining her saggy chest.

Her 45-year-old breasts flopped out and Hannah let loose a sigh of relief. She didn't know why she had a bra from her college days still in the mix but when she checked the cup size she shook her head and tossed the bra in a donation bag, then pulled out a large underwire bra designed for women her age.

Pulling out another drawer, Hannah grabbed a pair of loose-fitting orange shorts that would comfortably fit around her wide ass and hips. They were 'Mom shorts' that looked dorky and unfashionable and came all the way down to the knees, hiding those unwanted ripples of cellulite from the backs of an older woman's thighs. She got dressed and looked at herself in the mirror. Hannah looked every bit the part of a woman in her mid 40s who worked in college administrations. There was nothing cool or hip about her, nothing particularly sexy unless you were into classic MILFs or were a man over 40.

Hannah put the finishing touches on her appearance by grabbing a pair of glasses from on top of the dresser and placing them over her crinkling eyes.

"Oof, glad I didn't forget these or else I'd just be listening to the movies! Heh!" She said, chuckling to herself and shaking her head.

"Hannah?" Ruby called from the hallway.

Hannah padded barefoot to the door and opened it looking down at the 13-year-old girl sitting on the floor in the hallway.

“What’s with this ‘Hannah’ business? What happened to calling me ‘mom’ huh?” Hannah asked smirking down at the girl.

Ruby looked up at the middle-aged woman who had started the night as her cool, trendy 25-year-old babysitting. Her eyes became glassy and her breath was stuck in her throat for a moment.

“Mom...? Mommy?” The girl gasped, hoping beyond hope.

“Yeah, that’s what they call me around these parts...” Hannah said with a smirk, putting her veiny hands on her flabby waist.

Ruby jumped up and wrapped her arms around Hannah tightly, pressing her head into the older woman’s bosom and squeezing her in a hug that she never wanted to end.

Hannah gently stroked her daughter’s hair as she hugged her back, not sure what this was all about.

“And what were you doing on the floor baby? Trying to catch dust bunnies?” Hannah asked, chuckling at her own joke.

Ruby shook her head and laughed.

“Oh my god mom! You’re soooo corny!” The girl cried happily.

“How are you doing on your homework? Remember, no movie marathon until all of your school work is done...” Hannah said in a ‘and I mean it’ kind of tone.

Ruby showed Hannah the completed math worksheet.

“All done!” The girl announced chipperly.

“Awww baby. I’m so proud of you.” Hannah said, pulling her daughter against her chest again and kissing the top of her head.

“Sooo... movie time?” Ruby asked.

“Yep! Unless you want to pick up on our dance party again and see some more of your mom’s super cool, rockin’ moves...” Hannah said with a grin.

The older woman awkwardly moved her arms around and jiggled her hips in an attempt at sexy dancing that would make Elaine from Seinfeld look good. Ruby’s jaw dropped and she held her hand up to her mouth in a gasping giggle.

“OMG! Mom, you're soooo embarrassing!... I love it!” Ruby exclaimed, hugging Hannah again.

The 45-year-old smirked as she walked with her daughter back downstairs.

“Not good enough for one of your little videos on the TikTok huh? Everybody’s a critic.” Hannah sighed with a smile.

They got back down to the living room and Hannah remembered something.

“Hey! There’s a documentary you have to watch for History class this weekend right?” She asked Ruby.

The girl nodded.

“Oh right. Yeah I have to watch this stupid old documentary about the World Trade Center attacks and then in class we have to talk about what life might have been like for people in that time.” Ruby explained pulling out her laptop to load the documentary.

Hannah paused, stunned.

“The World Trade Center attacks... on September 11th?” She asked.

“Oh! Is that what 9/11 means? Good to know!” Ruby said with a shrug.

Hannah was shocked that her daughter's class was covering the 9/11 attacks like they were ancient history! ‘Talk about what life might have been like’? Just

ask anyone alive right now!... or... oh god... anyone over the age of 20... or maybe even 23 since infants and toddlers won't remember... really it would mostly be people over the age of 30 with any sort of significant memory of the event...

A few more hairs sprouted up on her head and her cheeks gained several new wrinkles as her neck loosened and her breasts and ass sunk lower. Just like that Hannah was 48-years-old.

"I'm old!" She groaned as if it had just occurred to her.

Ruby shifted over on the couch and wrapped her arms around her mom in a hug again.

"I know, but I still love you." The 13-year-old said affectionately.

The rest of the evening went without incident. Hannah managed to suffer through the frankly patronizing historical documentary about an event she had lived through in her late 20s. She made it to the end without getting any older and the ladies celebrated by watching a pair of movies that Hannah had loved when she was Ruby's age - *Pretty in Pink* and *Labyrinth*.

The credits of the 1986 David Bowie fantasy film were rolling across the screen in the darkened living room. Ruby had fallen asleep on her mom's shoulder and Hannah was also beginning to nod off with her graying head tipped back on the sofa.

She was startled awake by a tapping on the window.

\*Rap\* \*rap\* \*rap\*

"Psst Hannah! I'm here!" A young man whispered from the darkness of the front porch.

Hannah was startled at first and wondered if she should call 9-1-1. She wished Professor Hoffsteder, or Charles as she now affectionately knew him as, was

home. 'Of course someone would be trying to break in on the night my husband's out of town!' She thought to herself.

But looking out the window she recognized the young man skulking around out there. Gavin Pace, one of her husband's grad students and a boy she had many dealings with mostly because he always turned in important forms late to the university's administration's office and then showed up to try and charm his way into getting them pushed through without any repercussions.

The older woman smirked. He was a cute boy and she could certainly understand his charm... maybe if she wasn't married and about 30 years younger...

She padded over to the front door as Gavin shuffled around outside loudly whispering through the window.

"Hannah? Is that you? I'm here to give you that foot massage baby..." He growled in a cocky voice.

Hannah raised an eyebrow wondering what in the world this boy was on about. Was he stoned?

She flicked on the front porch light and opened the door, standing there in her mom-shorts and matronly blouse with her leathery arms folded across her saggy chest and her lined middle-aged face smirked at the kid.

"Mr. Pace. What in god's name are you up to and what possible reason do you have to be showing up at our house at this godforsaken hour? Come on... out with it, and the excuse better be good..." She said sternly with her intimidating motherly-vibes radiating from her as she questioned the young man.

"I...I..." He stammered.

For a moment he looked shocked at Hannah - as if she looked much different than he was expecting her to.

“You... we were... uh... the foot massage and... other stuff...” He trailed off, honestly unsure of what he was even saying.

Hannah snorted a laugh and shook her head, raising an eyebrow at the young man.

“You do know that I'm old enough to be your mother, right?” She asked.

Frankly she was flattered. It had been quite a few years since someone as young and handsome as Gavin had even thought of her in a romantic or sexual context.

“Uh y-yeah... I don't know what I was thinking. I'm really sorry Mrs. Hoffsteder.” He said, shaking his head, absolutely mortified.

Hannah smirked at the young man and chuckled.

“I'll tell you what though. I never turn down a good foot massage, so if you want to come in I can put on a pot of tea and you're welcome to go to town on my bunions.” She said with a laugh pointing down at her veiny older feet as she wiggled her bright orange toes. “I can't promise anything beyond that though, since my daughter's asleep on the coach.” She pointed out frankly.

The boy slowly backed up toward the porch steps, shaking his head.

“Uh that's all right...” He began to say.

“...Or how about you head home and try to get a good night's sleep and we'll both agree never to mention this little interaction to my husband.” Hannah suggested with a wink.

“Y-yeah. Uh... great idea. We can just pretend I was never here! Sorry again! Goodnight Mrs. Hoffsteder!” He said waving as he ran down the steps to the sidewalk.

“Night night! Get home safe!” She said, shaking her head. “Kids today...” She mumbled rolling her eyes.

The next afternoon Professor Charles Hoffsteder arrived back home. Hannah greeted him at the door with a big hug and kiss as Ruby clapped her hands happily behind them.

“Welcome home hun. How did it go?” She asked her husband.

He put his briefcase down and gave Ruby a hug.

“Oh, you know. It was fine. I’m just a bit jet-lagged.” He said, sounding tired.

“Well, why don’t you head upstairs and go lay down. I’ll fix some lunch for Ruby and then I can come up and join you.” She said, leaning over to his ear. “Maybe show you just how much I missed you last night...” She whispered, loosening his tie.

“Ewww are you guys talking about sexy stuff? Gross!” Ruby groaned, sticking out her tongue and pointing her finger into her mouth.

“There’s nothing gross about the fact that your mom and dad love each other very much!” Charles said, winking at his wife.

“Still... old people getting all gushy is just... yuck!” Ruby retorted with a giggle. She was secretly LOVING it.

“Hey! We’re not that old missy!” Hannah said, putting her hands on her hips and furrowing her lined brow at her daughter.

“Well, if you’re missing having younger people around - good news! I just got off the phone with my sister on the way home and it sounds like your cousin Britney is going to be staying with us over the holidays!” Charles announced to his daughter.

The 13-year-old groaned and pouted at first. Britney was her older cousin who was in high school and had bullied Ruby all through their childhood. But...



Ruby clutched her necklace in her hand. She never got to know her grandparents and had always been curious about what having a sweet doting grandma might be like...

THE END.