Red Socks

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Abstract

DAD, can I borrow your tie?” “Yes, son?” ”It’s a quarter to seven, Billy.” ”I know, Mother, I know.” ”Can’t you comb your hair in your room, Billy? I have to brush my teeth and I’ll never be ready. John’s coming any minute!”...
DAD, can I borrow your tie?"
   "Yes, son."
   "It’s a quarter to seven, Billy."
   "I know, Mother, I know."
   "Can’t you comb your hair in your room, Billy? I have to brush my teeth and I’ll never be ready. John’s coming any minute!"

The fourteen year old boy stood in front of the bathroom mirror, patiently combing and recombing his unruly hair. The front lock which had faithfully hung over his forehead for years was being combed straight back with the help of generous supply of Brylcream. But it stubbornly persisted in standing straight up. Eventually the boy succeeding in getting it to lean slightly toward the rear. Satisfied, he opened the medicine cabinet and found his father’s aftershave lotion which he splashed on his face, the mirror, the sink and the bathroom wall. Maybe he just liked the aroma of the lotion. Or perhaps he thought he might be able to cultivate a whisker or two in the future by using it regularly.

On the way out of the bathroom he stumbled over a pair of his father’s shoes, stopped and measured his own shoes next to them, and happily noticed that, as usual, the size was nearly the same. He entered his own room and waded through piles of clothes and sporting equipment to the dresser where he found his billfold, and stuffing it into his pocket, proceeded to the living room.
"Wow! You look pretty sharp, Billy. Who's the lucky date this Saturday?"
"Thanks, sis. Aw, some girl."
"What's her name?"
"Sally. Dad, aren't you done eating yet? You're going to drive us, aren't you?"
"You look very nice, Billy. Straighten your collar, dear."
"What's wrong with it! Everyone wears it like this, Mom."
"Billy! You've got red socks on!"
"This is a sock hop, Sis. All the guys are wearing real snazzy socks. Think they're bright enough?"
"I guess! But with a pink skirt?"
"Well, what's wrong with it?"
"Nobody wears red and pink together!"
"Aw, all the fellows do. Red does!"
"No he doesn't. You'd better change them. What will Sally think?"
"Aw, she doesn't care. Dad! Hurry up!"
"Mother, he's wearing red socks and a pink shirt."
"Change your socks, dear."
"Now, Mother, it's all right. They don't notice colors at his age."
"But Daddy, I'd really be mad if John came wearing red and pink."
"Dad! You aren't hurrying. C'mon!"
"I'm all ready. I'll go out and start the car, and you get your coat and meet me out in front of the house."

Muttering to himself, the boy strode to his room. A few minutes later he came out, head down, and ambled hurriedly out the front door.
"Don't slam the door, dear." But it was too late. The door slammed and the boy ran down the front steps, two at a time, and hopped into the waiting car. He curled his legs under him in the front seat.
"Move your feet a little, son, they're on my overcoat. Say, aren't those my gray socks you're wearing? What happened to the other ones?"
"Aw, Dad. Nobody wears red socks with a pink shirt."
—Jacqueline Wagner, T. Jl. Sr.