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Title: Ageist

Gasping, my mom stared at me with an utter look of amazement. In her hand, was a practice SAT test that I had just finished a few minutes ago. I just stared back, not understanding the situation. She attempted to step towards me, only to stumble and catch herself on my desk.

My mouth fell open to ask if she was okay, but she interrupted and asked, "How did you do it?"

"What? Mommy you're being weird..." I trailed off as she grabbed my shoulders.

*"How did you **do** it? How did you manage to get a perfect score on the SAT at the age of nine! You being talented was already a well known fact, but I never expected it to go this far," she exclaimed.*

"Why are you shouting?" I complained, bursting into tears. The only reason I took the test was because she wanted me to, so why was she mad at me?

When she saw the tears trail down my cheeks, she immediately wrapped her arms around me.

"I'm sooo sorry Jessica. It just came out like that. Just ... it isn't normal for a nine year old to be able to do this. You're different, but you're also special."

"Jessica!" The thunderous voice of my mother snapped me out of my memory. "Do I have to say 'Jessica' fifty times for you to listen? Come on. We're here."

Loud and crowded would be the best way to describe my first impression of high school, when I stepped in. Laughter and shouting filled my ears as I was constantly being jostled back and forth by the students' bodies, even with my hand firmly clasped

in my mother's. Smells assaulted my nose as well, the gag inducing body odor and overwhelming perfumes made me sneeze into my sleeve. Somehow, I managed to duck my head lower than it already was, causing my hair to fall in curtains of caramel and blocking out the chaos. My bag, that's size was equivalent to my whole upper torso, weighed me down, so I stopped and adjusted it. This, of course, caused me to get pushed along with the tide of students, since they just had to be *awfully* rude. Mom looked back because she noticed that my hand had slipped, and I took in the concerned look on her face.

"Are you sure you're okay with this? To make you feel better, the office is right there," she pointed down the hallway, but I was too tiny to see over the heads of the towering, and frankly terrifying, high schoolers. "But we could still go back to the car, if you can't deal with this, and just enroll you in the elementary school." To respond, I just shook my head, too busy trying to stay standing and continue breathing to speak. Having claustrophobia was added to my mental list of high school downers, which already included rudeness, nasty smells, and ginormous students, along with a few others.

Although my mom still had her concerned expression we continued forward until we finally reached the office. Jerking the door open with the desperation of getting out of the chaos that continued to go on in the hallway, she hurried into the office. With that same desperation, I rushed in after her.

Inside, we were finally greeted with silence. It was sparsely decorated with a few picture frames hung here and there. A maroon couch was situated against the wall, and above it was a painting of a flowery landscape. However, the majority of the area was

taken up by the office clerk's workspace. Noticing us walk, or rather tumble, into the office, she called us over.

"Do you need assistance?" Fake enthusiasm dripped from her mouth, and she sounded like squeaky mouse.

"Uhh yes please," my mother responded in a breathy voice, "I would like to enroll a student, my daughter."

"Of course! Where is she?" Swiveling her head side to side, she searched for the new student, namely me.

"Right here," I proclaimed in an irritated voice, as I raised my hand. Who had such little common sense that they can't tell that the person standing right beside her mother might just happen to be the one they were looking for? Shock rippled onto her face as her bright, red painted lips fell open, which created a double chin. I could practically feel her eyes as they looked me up and down, which didn't take long due to my short stature.

"*She's* the student?"

"Yes ma'am. Her name is Jessica Choi, and she is here to attend as a freshman," my mom informed. There was an obvious strain of exasperation in her voice.

"O-of course! Uh, how silly of me..." she trailed off, still staring at me, until she turned to her computer and started furiously typing. What appeared on the screen seemed to deepen her shock, because she whispered, "Oh Lord."

"Is there a problem?"

“N-nothing,” she attempted to smile, but it just came out as an ugly grimace. “I’m just shocked that a girl at the age of ten is attending high school. Shouldn’t she be at the elementary school instead?” Well, she sucks.

“Jessica is actually a very talented girl, who has the perfect capability to attend classes at a high school level. Now, could you give us her schedule? Classes are probably going to start soon and I would absolutely *hate* for her to miss out.” Annoyance and frustration was oozing from my mom’s voice. In response, the office clerk said nothing, and just handed me my schedule. Her hands were shaking, but I couldn't tell if it was old age, she had gray hair and a face etched with wrinkles, or shock. After I reached out to snatch the slip of paper from her hands, my mom and I stomped out of the office. This was the first of all the ageist situations I would encounter in the future.