

# Pretty Petey

*by MadeOfSpaces*

Petey has found himself in an embarrassing outfit at a garden party. Even worse, some older girl seems intent on bothering him. But perhaps he will find that her attention is not such a bad thing after all?

The Costume Box

2022

*Chapter 1*

## Pretty Petey

“Aren’t you looking pretty?” the girl beamed. She was around Peter’s age, maybe a year or two older, but where Peter was petite and juvenile, a persistent pout filling out his plump rosy red cheeks, the girl was mature, angular, amazonian - a carefully composed arrangement of strawberry blonde hair framing her smiling face.

“I’m a boy.” Peter growled, shooting the girl a hostile grimace.

“I know - little girls don’t usually wear shorts to a garden party!” she joked.

Nor do sixteen year old boys, Peter thought vindictively - at least not baby blue dress shorts held up only by a pair of infantile striped suspenders. They didn’t usually wear peter-pan collar shirts complete with matching blue piping, either. Nevertheless, his mother's incessant habit of treating him like her own personal dress-up doll had ensured that he was the only boy at Ms Robinson’s 50th birthday party dressed like a toddler at a royal wedding - even the real babies looked more mature than him! Even his own little brother Christian, who was only nine, had been allowed to wear a simple blue polo and brown slacks. Christian got to wear shoes as well, but his mother had insisted that Peter leave his sandals at the door. According to her, going barefoot “completed the look”, whatever that was supposed to mean.

In aid of preserving his painstakingly curated outfit at its most adorable, Peter's mom had even forbidden him from "playing" on the lawn. It wasn't like he actually had any interest in getting involved in the stuff the younger boys were doing out there - it seemed to mostly consist of hitting each other and rolling around in the grass and dirt - but he had hoped the garden might at least offer him a quiet place to ride out the afternoon away from prying eyes. His mother had other plans however, and would not let him out of her sight for even a moment. The last time he'd even put a foot on the lawn she'd actually gone so far as to hook a finger inside his empty belt loops and kept him anchored next to her chair! She'd let go after a little while, but he was still trapped on the patio under her supervision while all Ms Robinson's friends cooed and fussed over his outfit. It was humiliating! Peter knew very well that he couldn't have looked any older than ten in the ridiculous get up, but the whole situation meant he was probably hovering somewhere closer to around five or six in most people's estimations - including, he assumed, this mystery girl.

"Boys can't be pretty." Peter insisted, still staring malevolently up at her "Boys are handsome."

"Well that can't be right, since you're just about the prettiest little boy I've ever seen!"

Peter frowned in confusion. Was she teasing him, or was this just her way of being nice? He turned away shyly as she crouched down to his level.

“You’re Petey right? Mrs Richardson's boy?”

“Err...It’s Peter, actually.”

“Are you sure?” she asked. “Mrs Richardson definitely told me Petey...”

He blushed, half in anger and half in embarrassment. Of course he was sure! It was his name, wasn’t it?

“Petey’s just what my mom calls me...” he confessed.

“Ohh! You don’t mind if I call you Petey as well, do you? It’s just so much more adorable!”

Petey looked down sulkily at the ground. ‘Pretty’ and ‘Adorable’ were two adjectives he definitely wanted to avoid. Still he acquiesced, shrugging his shoulders and kicking nervously at the patio tiles “Whatever...”

“Great! I’m Anabelle, but you can just call me Annie.” said the girl “Look at that, we’ve already got cute little nicknames for each other.”

The boy nodded curtly and gave a tight tired smile, already a little worn out by Annie’s relentless energy.

“So what’d you think of my mom’s party?”

Petey tried to look vaguely enthusiastic, not wanting to come across as rude. “It’s good...” he mumbled half-heartedly.

Annie rolled her eyes “Come on! It sucks right? I could sense you pouting from a mile away!”

Petey let out a sigh of relief, happy that he'd found someone he could confide in. "Everyone keeps poking me and pulling me and calling me cute." he complained.

The older girl gave a hearty laugh "Well, you can't really blame them. Like I said, you're practically the prettiest little boy in the world!"

"Shuddup..." Petey whined, but found himself suppressing a smile. In truth, he much preferred attention from Annie than from the posse of middle aged women who had been harassing him before.

"Pretty little Petey!" she continued, tapping him on the nose. "So - do you wanna get out of here and hang out in my room?"

Petey hesitated for just a second. He barely knew this girl, but she seemed nice enough and he was desperate to escape from under his mother's thumb. He resisted the urge to sound too eager "Ok..."

"Nice! But we should probably tell your mom where we're going. I saw what happened when you tried to head out onto the lawn!"

The boy flushed red "You saw that?"

Annie tutted, waving her hand casually as she dismissed his trivial concerns "Calm down, I'm not gonna tell anyone." She rose to her feet, grabbing hold of Petey's hand and leading him over to his mother across the patio. "I'm just taking Petey upstairs."

Petey's mom finished her sip of tea before smiling her approval "Of course, dear. Be a good boy for Annabelle, Petey."

He cringed at the remark, stumbling as Annie shepherded him swiftly into the safety of the house and led him towards the staircase.

"I love your hair." Annie complimented as they ascended, touching lightly at a few stray locks of the curly brown cascade tumbling down onto the baby blue tipped edges of his peter-pan collar. The full hairstyle was made up of layer upon layer of silky chocolate tufts, converging to form a luxuriantly tousled yet somehow perfectly shaped mane around the back of his head.

"Thanks..." Petey squeaked out shyly "You too..."

Annie ignored his compliment, still focussing on Petey's virtues "And your eyelashes!" she continued as they reached the door of her room "How did you get them to be so long and defined!?"

Petey blushed "I dunno...they're just like that."

"Lucky!"

That comment made him feel somehow even more embarrassed. "My mom said it's a boy thing..."

For an older teenager, Annie's room was relatively immature - with garish pink bed sheets, a small collection of dolls on a shelf, and a veritable army of stuffed animals on the bed.

Petey supposed he wasn't really one to judge. Despite his constant requests to redecorate, his own bedroom was still covered with the same light blue wallpaper featuring sleeping teddy bears that had been there since he was born - and he'd had the same fire truck theme bed sheets since he was three.

The older girl sat down confidently on the bed, patting her thighs.

"Come on and sit on my lap." she instructed, as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

Petey let out a little harumph. He had come to learn to expect it, but people thinking he was a little kid still got on his nerves.

"You know I'm sixteen, right?" he intoned seriously, having got quite used to the task of explaining his implausible real age over the course of his life.

To his surprise however, Annie looked entirely unphased.

"I know. Your mom told me."

Petey narrowed his eyes. "And you want me to sit on your lap?"

"Why not?" Annie said mischievously "You're little enough, right?"

He crossed his arms, adopting a petulant frown "I'm not little."

She sighed, "You know I didn't mean it like that."

She patted her legs again, gesturing for him to walk forwards.  
“Come on. It’ll be fun.”

The boy continued to maintain his sceptical glance, but took a few hesitant steps towards the girl - if only to better argue his point. As soon as he was in range of her grasp however, Annie pulled him forwards; easily repositioning him into a cosy position on her knee.

“Hey!” Petey protested, trying to wriggle out of her all enveloping arms - but she only cuddled him tighter, nuzzling her nose into the back of his hair.

“Stop whining!” she scolded, gently rocking him back and forth “It’s not so bad.”

“It’s embarrassing.” Petey said gravely.

“So what? I’m not gonna tell anyone. Are you?”

“No...”

“So it doesn’t matter.” she insisted, tickling playfully at his shirt.

Petey let out a few involuntary giggles, giving up on his feeble resistance and instead letting Annie snuggle him closer against her chest.

“What’d you wanna do then? Do you wanna play a game?”

He gave her a skeptical glance “Like what?”

“Hmmm...” the girl considered “What about dress-up?”

“What?”

“Dress up! I’m sure I’ve got a bunch of old sun dresses that would fit you perfectly!”

Petey barely had time to consider the suggestion, let alone shout out his objections before Annie rose to her feet - standing him up on the carpet. He also failed to notice that she’d already unclasped his suspenders - causing his shorts to instantly drop down around his ankles as he stumbled in clumsy pursuit towards her standing by the closet.

“I’m NOT wearing a dress!” he insisted.

“Looks like you’re not wearing shorts either.” Annie smirked. It was only then that Petey realised what had happened, scrambling to cover his cartoon briefs “Cute briefs by the way.” Annie continued, “ I love Super Pups!”

The boy groaned, struggling to get his shorts up again as he cursed the ridiculous way his mother insisted on dressing him. He would have thought that at sixteen he would at least have been allowed to move up to tighty whities, but as it stood he was still on hand-me-downs from his little brother’s first grade days. Annie interrupted his efforts to regain his modesty, placing a prohibitive foot on top of the shorts and pinning them to the ground.

“Come on.” she enticed “You’d look soooo pretty.”

“No!” Petey reiterated, giving up on the shorts and instead standing up straight to cross his arms with faux-authority.

Annie rolled her eyes “You’re so boring.” she chided “But alright. We can play something else. You’re pretty enough in just your cute little shirt and undies.”

She walked away from the closet and instead sat cross-legged on the bed, patting the place opposite her. Petey went to pull up his shorts again, but she gave him a warning frown.

“Leave them.”

“But-”

“Don’t be such a baby.” she scolded playfully “The world’s not going to end just because I saw your little legs.”

Petey blushed, but kicked the shorts and suspenders away - traipsing morosely over to sit opposite Annie on the bed. She smiled, happy that his crossed legs failed to conceal the Super Pups logo displayed on the front of his undies.

“Alright. Truth or Dare?”

The boy considered the matter for a moment, and was ultimately going to pick dare, before he considered that she still might be trying to get him in a dress. “Truth.” he settled on, confident that he’d avoided another humiliation.

“Cool.” Annie stated, clearly a little disappointed. She thought for a few seconds before coming up with a question, a fresh smirk forming on her lips.

“If you don’t want people to think you’re pretty, why’d you come to my mom’s party dressed like that?”

Petey gulped, reluctant to reveal the embarrassing extent of his mother's influence. But that was how the game was played, and rules were rules.

"My mom made me." he confessed "She's always putting me in...outfits and stuff."

Annie suppressed a smirk, looking incredulous "For real? The way you were pouting I thought you'd lost a bet or something."

Petey nodded morosely "For real."

"But what about your brother? Christian, right? She doesn't make him wear all the same outfits?"

The boy shrugged "I guess it's because I'm so much smaller than him. They don't really make stuff like this for kids older than six. But you know. I'm small."

"Aww," Annie cooed, "That's so cute!"

"It's not! It's the worst. She's always treating me like a little kid. Last year, she even made me tell the waiter at a buffet I was five just so we could get the kids discount!"

The older girl couldn't hold it in anymore, bursting into laughter "I'm sorry - but that's too funny!"

Petey cracked the smallest of smiles, somewhat enjoying Annie's laughter even if it was at his expense. "Okay." he insisted, trying to move on "Your turn. Truth or Dare?"

"Truth." she said, without even hesitating.

He bit his lip, weighing whether or not the question was too embarrassing. He eventually spat it out, not really being able to think of anything else. “Do you really think I’m pretty, or were you just messing with me?”

“Of course!” Annie reassured “I know girls who’d kill for lashes like that!”

“Shuddup...” Petey smirked shyly.

“Seriously. You’re cute. You’ve got great hair, and that outfit of yours is adorable - even if your mommy did pick it out for you.”

The boy gave a bashful smile, staring down at the bedsheets to make sure she didn’t see the expression plastered across his face.

“Alright - Truth or Dare?”

“Dare.” he said confidently - not wanting to reveal any more incriminating personal information.

“Let’s see...” Annie considered “I think that little shirt of yours can go bye-bye.”

“What?”

“It’s a dare, doofus. Take off your shirt.”

He let out a pitiful whine and slowly moved to comply, but the garment got stuck around his neck as he went to pull it over his head. Eventually, Annie took pity at the adorable sight and went to intervene. She finally got it uncaught,

tossing it across the room to form a pile with the shorts and suspenders.

“Well, well, well.” she smirked “Pretty little Petey in just his little boy briefs.”

Petey felt his cheeks flush hot, but somehow he was still smiling “My turn.”

“Truth” Annie said, not even waiting for him to ask.

The boy took some time to dance around the question that was on his mind “You’re a senior, right?”

“Yep. Graduating in May.”

“Are you dating anyone?”

She couldn’t help but giggle at his transparency “Why, you interested?”

“No! I mean...”

She put a slender finger on his lip, interrupting him. “I like you, if that’s what you mean.”

Just at that moment the bedroom door swung open, Petey’s mother standing in the doorway.

“Petey, we’re headed home now...” she trailed off as she saw the little pile of clothes in the middle of the room and the exposed boy sitting crossed legged on the bed. He instinctively put two spindly arms over his chest - very concerned about what she might think.

“Sorry, Mrs Richardson.” Annie intervened “The little guy wasn’t really in the mood for pants - or a shirt.”

Petey’s mom gave an exasperated sigh, but to his relief she didn’t sound angry “Oh Petey, what are you like? Get dressed and come downstairs, your brother’s already waiting in the car.”

The boy nodded obediently, hurrying over to the pile of clothes and starting to get dressed again as his mother left the room.

“Need any help?” Annie asked from the bed, still sporting a mischievous grin.

“N..no!”

“Oh right, you’re a big boy. Almost forgot.”

The boy quickly finished getting ready, waving a nervous goodbye to Annie as he tiptoed his way out of the room.

“See ya Petey. Come and play again soon, alright?”

He nodded, allowing a huge grin to spread across his face as soon as he was out of her view. Toddling down the stairs, he quickly slipped on his sandals before heading out to the car, opening the back door, and buckling himself into the booster seat that his mother still insisted he was short enough to need.

“What’re you smiling about, booster boy?” Christian’s mocking voice interrupted from the passenger seat.

He looked up defiantly “Nothing...”

“Thinking about your new girlfriend?” he continued, smirking.

Petey grimaced. Clearly their mother had already told him who’s room he’d been visiting. He was almost certain that this was going to end up as prime material in Christian’s teasing routine, but somehow he didn’t care.

“Leave him alone, Chris.” their mother scolded as she sat down in the driver’s seat.

“I was only asking him about Annabella. Admit it. She’s your girlfriend isn’t she?” the younger boy accused, levying the charge in the same threatening way that someone might dangle any other embarrassing secret above someone’s head - like wetting the bed or having a security blanket. Petey was certainly used to the tone - Christian having held many such secrets over him in the past.

“No...” Petey denied, almost reflexively, but his heart wasn’t in it. He kept smiling, staring out the window as the car pulled away - still thinking about her.