# Twelve

*by andlat*

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The Costume Box
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*Chapter 1*

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“I can't do that. That's for little kids and I'm going to be twelve tomorrow.” Jackson had heard it a million times over the last month as Logan counted down and now, finally, it was Logan's birthday. But was it really going to stop? He hoped so.

“Now that I'm twelve-” even a room over, it was annoying enough that Jackson almost covered his ears as he sought refuge in the kitchen. Seriously. Twelve wasn’t that big of a deal! Sure, he was excited to turn ten in a few months, but that was different. Ten was double digits! Twelve was… twelve. He was tired of hearing about it. There wasn't even that big of a difference between nine and not even actually twelve yet. Everyone knew you only turned the age when you blew out the candles, right? At least, he was pretty sure that was how it worked. Maybe you either blow out the candles or it hits midnight. That felt-

“You better not be planning to steal some frosting.” Dad said, interrupting Jackson's thoughts.

“I wasn't.” He said earnestly. He had hardly even noticed the Minecraft cake sitting there, the one and two candles standing proudly next to each other. Maybe… he checked over his shoulder. Dad had disappeared back out to the rowdy party. He moved quickly, snatching the one off of the cake and stuffing it down into the kitchen trash where no one would be

able to find it. Was it a dumb thing to do? Sure, but it made him feel better. He walked out into the party, feeling quite pleased with himself.

“Do we want to do cake or presents first?” Mom asked a short while later. Jackson, remembering what he had done, joined the chorus for cake. They all gathered around the table as Dad disappeared into the kitchen. He returned a moment later with the cake, still missing the candle, in his hands. Jackson tried his best to hide his delighted smirk.

“Looks like we lost the one somewhere.”

“It wasn't on the counter?” Mom asked. Dad shrugged and Jackson relaxed. No one suspected him. For a moment, it looked like Logan might make some obnoxious comment about how a twelve year old doesn't care about those things, but he stayed silent, much to Jackson's relief.

“Happy birthday to you,” Everyone sang, Logan's best friend Noah leading the group in tacking on a joke verse or two. Now was his moment. Logan leaned forward, cheeks puffed out dramatically as he drank in all the birthday boy attention. He blew out the candles.

To Logan, the next instant passed at a snail's pace. He felt his underwear shift and balloon with a crinkle in the same instant that he felt the elastic string of a party hat under his chin. His arms and legs appeared to rush toward his torso as everything in the room seemed to suddenly double, maybe even triple in size. Somehow, he went from sitting on a chair at the head of the table to standing on it, hands resting on the table to steady

himself. His green and black shorts and t-shirt, appropriately themed to match his cake, erupted in color as they morphed into a pair of shortalls over a Bunnydale onesie. To everyone else, Logan changed from twelve year old to toddler in a party hat in the blink of an eye.

“What the?” Logan said, his voice whiny and high.

“Mommy's big boy blew out his candles all by himself!” Mom cooed, coming over and scooping the confused toddler off the chair. “Are you ready for cake?”

“Mom, what” was all he could say as Mom set him down on the edge of the table, Dad moving the cake aside. “What's going on?”

“Someone's excited for cake!” Dad said, leaning over and planting a kiss on Logan's chubby cheek.

“We'd better get this outfit off him. Remember the mess he made last year?”

“He's two now, mom.” Jackson said. “He knows better.”

“What is going on!?” Logan exclaimed, scared and confused by how everyone was taking it in stride that he was now being stripped down to his diaper by his mom. He looked at all his friends, who just smiled and waved at him. “Guys! Help me!”

“Are we gonna get back to the game, dude?” Noah whispered to Jackson. Logan felt betrayed. They were his friends, not Jackson's.

“Let's watch Logan eat his cake first. You only turn two once, right?” He chuckled as he looked over at Logan, who was doing his best to fight being put in a highchair, giving his brother quite the look at his chubby body and thick diaper.

“There we go.” Mom said as he finally slid inside.

“Mom! I swear! I'm not two!” Mom was too busy getting him cake, so he looked to his brother. Jackson was busy laughing with his friends, but just for a second, Logan could have sworn Jackson looked over and winked at him.

“Here we go, birthday boy!” Logan squirmed desperately as all his friends moved as one to gather around his highchair.

“Please, someone remembers, right?” He asked. “Jackson, I know you- mmph!” Mom had pushed a bit of cake into his mouth.

“Someone's awfully fussy.”

“Yeah, all this excitement and no nap?” Dad said over the assembled boys’ heads.

“Well, the big boys can party in your absence.” Mom said, lifting Logan out of his highchair.

“Mom! I'm not two! I'm not two!” Logan's voice faded as Mom carried him out of sight. Jackson grinned before following the others back to the living room. He wasn't sure what had happened, but he knew one thing for certain: no number candles at his birthday. Better safe than sorry.