



Proud
Hannah Kennedy

Frankie is getting ready for their school prom. Their mother is disappointed that they have decided not to wear the outfit picked out for them.

FRANKIE: Before you say anything, I know! I know this isn't what you picked out for me. I know this isn't how you wanted me to wear my hair, either. I know nothing about the way that I look right now is what you had in mind, but here's the thing, mum, I don't want to look like what you have in mind.

I tried it on, what you picked out, I did, and I tried so, so hard to like it. I wanted to like it for you but I can't. Because it doesn't look like me. That shade of green isn't me. The way it fits around my neck and my hips doesn't feel like me. I stood in front of the mirror, and I stared at myself, I took in every single inch of me from the tips of my toes all the way to the top of my head, and it felt like I was looking at a different person. As if the atoms of who I am had transformed me into a person that I didn't recognise.

And this is my day. This is my prom. And I've spent my entire life trying to be the person that you want me to be. Be your Frankie. And I've wanted to want that for so long. Every morning, I would wake up and wish that I would want to be the person that you see, but I'm not. I have never been that person, and trying to be that person is rotting me from the inside out.

And I think you know that, don't you? You can see that I hate myself. Actually, no, that's not true. I don't hate myself. I hate the version of me that you think I am, that you think I should be. I love the real me. I love the person I am when I'm with my friends, I love the sound of my name when my friends say it, I love the way I hold myself, I love the way I laugh. I love all the parts of myself that I am too terrified to let you see in case I disappoint you.

But I think I've realised now that I'll always disappoint you. So, I might as well be me with my full chest because spending my prom being miserable is not worth it for a few photos that you'd like to stick in the family album.

This is what I'm wearing to prom. And I like the way I look in it, I like the way I feel in it.

And I hope you'll find it in your heart to be proud of me anyway.