

Paul arrives home from school, greeting his mother as he enters the house. "Hey, Mom, I'm home," he says. His mother, with a kind smile, greets him back and asks if he wants anything to snack on, offering up some crackers and cheese. Paul seems rather enthused and happily agrees to partake in the snack. He asks if he can get some chocolate milk with it, and his mother is more than willing to oblige.

His mother finishes making the snack and pours the chocolate milk. As they sit down to talk, she asks Paul how his day at school went, and Paul recounts a confounding tale. "So, there I was, halfway through my day of school, when all of a sudden, the lessons shifted from the usual stuff I learn to being some serious elementary-level stuff. I'm talking simple addition and subtraction. But the most unusual part was I seemed to be the only one to find it out of place," Paul says.

His mother, unsure how to react at first, ponders on it for a minute and then says, "Maybe if I see what you're talking about, then I'll get a better idea of what's going on." Paul agrees to show her the classwork he did today, so he pulls it out and hands it to her. She glances over it and says, "Wow." Paul then says, see this isn't the schoolwork of a high schooler. It looks like something a first-grader would have."

His mother then cuts him off and says, "And you have no trouble understanding and solving these?"

"Well, obviously," says Paul, confused by his mother's statement. "It looks like you might need to be moved up a grade or something then if it's too easy for you."

Paul seemed completely frustrated at her comments. This is the same way the kids and the teachers at school were acting too. Paul decided to just drop the whole thing, opting

instead to go with the flow. After all, anything he says just gets diverted to a nonsensical conversation about how smart he must be, instead of addressing the clear and glaring problem that the questions are made for literal babies.

"I think I'm just going to go to bed for the night," says Paul when his mother asks him, "Do you need any help getting dressed or brushing your teeth before bed?"

Paul just looks at her like she's crazy, an absolute loon. He shakes it off and says, "Uhhh, no, I'm good. I can handle it myself."

His mother then says, "I'm so proud of you getting dressed for bedtime all by yourself. You're such a smarty-pants, my little genius."

Paul again decided to shrug it off and hoped things became more sane after a good night's rest. So he did his nightly routine, but when he went to change into his PJs, he found his clothes

had been replaced with what appeared to be clothes meant for a first-grader. He just grabbed the first pajama set that matched, put it on, and went to bed.

Knock, knock, knock could be heard on Paul's bedroom door, waking him up as his mother entered the room without permission. She went over to the bed and said, "Honey, it's time to get up for school. You've got a big day ahead of you. I believe you have your field trip to the aquarium today."

Paul just got even more confused than he had been the night prior as he asked, "What field trip?" But his mother decided that it wasn't really conversation time. Instead, she came over to Paul, sat him up, and said, "If we don't hurry, you're going to be late for class, sweetie."

Paul just shrugged it off and started to get out of bed. However, he noticed that his hands appeared smaller, in fact, his whole frame seemed to have diminished overnight, causing

him to panic for a minute. So, he made his way to the bathroom to get a look in the mirror. As he made his way out of his room, though, he couldn't help but notice that his room had been changed. His normal posters and video games seemed to be missing, replaced with what looked like toys and posters meant for a 1st grader. But he couldn't dwell on it, feeling a need to see his reflection.

As he made it to the mirror, he saw himself, but not as he had been the night before. Instead, he matched his room, as a small child stared back, looking no older than a boy attending his second or third year of primary school. He stared dumbfounded as he heard a knock at the door. He asked, "What is it?" and his mom responded, "I'm just checking to see if you're OK. You seemed to be in a rush. You made it to the potty in time, I hope?"

Paul was disgusted by the question and said, somewhat snippily, "I didn't wet myself, if that's what you're asking." His mom said in response,

"Well, good, Mr. Grumpy," and she went downstairs to set up breakfast.

Paul, somewhat still freaking out at the prospect of being hurled back to elementary school, took a breath and decided to take it in stride. Since it seemed like people didn't want to listen or at least believe his claims of getting younger, he felt it might just be best to go along with it. He made his way downstairs after a quick splash of water to the face and sat down at the table as his mother served up some cereal. Paul began to eat when he decided to try and get some answers, so he asked, "Hey, Mom, I know this is a dumb question, but how old am I?"

His mother looked at him with a grin that said, "Isn't that adorable?" and said, "Sweetie, you're seven, remember?" He then asked, "So I'm not a first-grader then?"

"No, honey, you go to second grade, remember?" she replied. Paul went back to eating awkwardly after asking such embarrassing questions. Then

he realized he had no idea what school or class he was going to, so he brought that up and said, "Uh, I don't know where I'm going for my classes, Mom."

She just chuckled and said, "Don't worry, I'm gonna drop you off at the classroom like I do every morning, hun. You're sure acting silly today. You didn't hit your head, did you?" Paul shook his head no. Not happy with the situation, but at the very least grateful he wouldn't be forced to figure out his classes himself, he felt a bit of relief.

After breakfast, his mother led him back to his room and said, "Time to get dressed for school, honey. Do you wanna pick out your outfit, or should I just do it?" Paul didn't even care at this point and said, "You can choose."

Soon enough, Paul was dressed up in a blue shirt covered in Power Rangers and a pair of jeans. Then they made their way to the car. At the door, Paul was stopped as his mother

grabbed his shoes and helped him put them on. She then tied the laces for him, and Paul made an offhanded comment, saying, "At least they're not Velcro." But his mom only heard something about Velcro and asked him if he'd rather wear the Velcro ones instead. He blushed and said, "No, these ones are fine."

They made their way out to the car, and Paul headed to the passenger seat as his mother placed his school bag in the back seat. She asked him what he was doing. "I'm getting in the car," he said, confused.

"Honey, you know you're too little to sit in the front seat. Come here," she replied. She then ushered him from the seat and led him to the back, where he spotted a car seat for older kids, which she expected him to sit in. So he got in the car and reluctantly sat in the booster seat as she buckled him in. They then had a fairly uneventful drive to school.

They pulled into the parking lot, and Paul felt



trapped in the booster seat as it seemed to be child-locked, and he couldn't seem to unlatch it. So he was forced to wait to be released by his mother. She undid the strap and led him by the hand through the school until they reached Mrs. Jensen's 2nd-grade class. His mother went to Mrs. Jensen and asked about the supposed field trip, but she clarified that the trip was next Tuesday, not today. Paul seemed kind of relieved; he really didn't want to go to an aquarium looking like this anyway.

Instead, Paul got to spend the day working on similar things he had been working on yesterday. That is until around the halfway point of the day when it felt like another kind of shift occurred. Suddenly, they had gone from learning addition and subtraction and were now learning ABCs and 123s, making Paul realize that this wasn't over yet.