Alyssa is excited for her first day of school. Summer was fun, but she always likes it when school starts again in September. There will probably be new kids in her class. Alyssa likes making new friends.

Alyssa thinks a lot about what she wants to wear on the first day of school. Her mom and dad say first impressions are important, so Alyssa wants to look nice.

**Alyssa and her mom go to the department store to get her new clothes. They walk past the boys’ section. Alyssa sees a bow tie. It has blue and pink stripes, and ties around the neck. Alyssa likes it. No, she loves it!**

“Mom, may I have that?” Alyssa says, pointing to the bow tie.

“But that’s for boys,” Alyssa’s mom says.

**“Why?” Alyssa asks. “It’s a bow. And it’s pretty.”**

“Well…” Alyssa’s mom says. She is thinking. Alyssa crosses her fingers.

“O.K., I guess we can get it.”

Alyssa jumps up and down in excitement. “Yay!”

**They pick up the bow tie. Alyssa and her mom also pick out a white dress with a collar with buttons down the front. It’s sort of like a boy’s shirt, but a dress. Alyssa thinks it will look cool with the bow tie.**

On the morning of the first day of school, Alyssa is very, very excited. She hardly eats any of her breakfast, even though her dad made waffles. Her dad shows her how to tie the bow tie. It’s harder than tying your shoe!

Alyssa’s dad walks her to the bus stop. When they get there, Alyssa’s friend Aveed is waiting there already with her mom.

“Hi Aveed!” Alyssa says. She’s happy to see her friend.

**“Is that your dad’s?” Aveed says, pointing to Alyssa’s new bow tie.**

“Um, no,” Alyssa says. “It’s mine!”

**“But bow ties are for boys!” Aveed says.**

**Alyssa is embarrassed. That is what her mom said, too! Maybe she shouldn’t wear the bow tie. But she also doesn’t want to take it off in front of her dad. So she just shrugs and says nothing.**

The bus comes, and Alyssa and Aveed get on. They sit together. Another classmate Tommy gets on at the next stop.

“Bow ties are for boys!” Tommy says. “Don’t you know that?”

“Yes,” Alyssa mumbles.

**Now she is really embarrassed. All the new kids will think she’s dumb for wearing a bow tie. She will ask the teacher when she gets to school to help her take it off.**

When they get to school, Alyssa and Aveed walk across the parking lot toward the front doors. Alyssa has her head down.

Suddenly, Alyssa hears, “A bow tie! That’s so cool.” Alyssa looks up, and sees a 7th grader looking at her.

“What?” Alyssa says.

“I like your bow tie!” the older girl says. “It is very cool. You must be very creative.”

Alyssa doesn’t feel embarrassed anymore. She likes being creative. She can’t wait to show her bow tie to her art teacher.

When one of her classmates says, “Bow ties are for boys,” Alyssa says, “Bow ties are for everyone. Especially if you are creative, like me!”

əˈlɪsə ɪz ɪkˈsaɪtəd fɔr hɜr fɜrst deɪ ʌv skul. ˈsʌmər wʌz fʌn, bʌt ʃi ˈɔlˌweɪz laɪks ɪt wɛn skul stɑrts əˈgɛn ɪn sɛpˈtɛmbər. ðɛr wɪl ˈprɑbəbli bi nu kɪdz ɪn hɜr klæs. əˈlɪsə laɪks ˈmeɪkɪŋ nu frɛndz.

əˈlɪsə θɪŋks ə lɑt əˈbaʊt wʌt ʃi wɑnts tu wɛr ɑn ðə fɜrst deɪ ʌv skul. hɜr mɑm ænd dæd seɪ fɜrst ɪmˈprɛʃənz ɑr ɪmˈpɔrtənt, soʊ əˈlɪsə wɑnts tu lʊk naɪs.

əˈlɪsə ænd hɜr mɑm goʊ tu ðə dɪˈpɑrtmənt stɔr tu gɛt hɜr nu kloʊðz. ðeɪ wɔk pæst ðə bɔɪz ˈsɛkʃən. əˈlɪsə siz ə baʊ taɪ. ɪt hæz blu ænd pɪŋk straɪps, ænd taɪz əˈraʊnd ðə nɛk. əˈlɪsə laɪks ɪt. noʊ, ʃi lʌvz ɪt!

“mɑm, meɪ aɪ hæv ðæt?” əˈlɪsə sɛz, ˈpɔɪntɪŋ tu ðə baʊ taɪ.

“bʌt ðæts fɔr bɔɪz,” əˈlɪsəz mɑm sɛz.

“waɪ?” əˈlɪsə æsks. “ɪts ə baʊ. ænd ɪts ˈprɪti.”

“wɛl…” əˈlɪsəz mɑm sɛz. ʃi ɪz ˈθɪŋkɪŋ. əˈlɪsə ˈkrɔsɪz hɜr ˈfɪŋgərz.

“oʊ.keɪ., aɪ gɛs wi kæn gɛt ɪt.”

əˈlɪsə ʤʌmps ʌp ænd daʊn ɪn ɪkˈsaɪtmənt. “jeɪ!”

ðeɪ pɪk ʌp ðə baʊ taɪ. əˈlɪsə ænd hɜr mɑm ˈɔlsoʊ pɪk aʊt ə waɪt drɛs wɪð ə ˈkɑlər wɪð ˈbʌtənz daʊn ðə frʌnt. ɪts sɔrt ʌv laɪk ə bɔɪz ʃɜrt, bʌt ə drɛs. əˈlɪsə θɪŋks ɪt wɪl lʊk kul wɪð ðə baʊ taɪ.

ɑn ðə ˈmɔrnɪŋ ʌv ðə fɜrst deɪ ʌv skul, əˈlɪsə ɪz ˈvɛri, ˈvɛri ɪkˈsaɪtəd. ʃi ˈhɑrdli its ˈɛni ʌv hɜr ˈbrɛkfəst, ˈivɪn ðoʊ hɜr dæd meɪd ˈwɑfəlz. hɜr dæd ʃoʊz hɜr haʊ tu taɪ ðə baʊ taɪ. ɪts ˈhɑrdər ðæn ˈtaɪɪŋ jʊər ʃu!

əˈlɪsəz dæd wɔks hɜr tu ðə bʌs stɑp. wɛn ðeɪ gɛt ðɛr, əˈlɪsəz frɛnd ˈɑˌveɪd ɪz ˈweɪtɪŋ ðɛr ɔlˈrɛdi wɪð hɜr mɑm.

“haɪ ˈɑˌveɪd!” əˈlɪsə sɛz. ʃiz ˈhæpi tu si hɜr frɛnd.

“ɪz ðæt jʊər dædz?” ˈɑˌveɪd sɛz, ˈpɔɪntɪŋ tu əˈlɪsəz nu baʊ taɪ.

“ʌm, noʊ,” əˈlɪsə sɛz. “ɪts maɪn!”

“bʌt baʊ taɪz ɑr fɔr bɔɪz!” ˈɑˌveɪd sɪz.

əˈlɪsə ɪz ɪmˈbɛrəst. ðæt ɪz wʌt hɜr mɑm sɛd, tu! ˈmeɪbi ʃi ˈʃʊdənt wɛr ðə baʊ taɪ. bʌt ʃi ˈɔlsoʊ ˈdʌzənt wɑnt tu teɪk ɪt ɔf ɪn frʌnt ʌv hɜr dæd. soʊ ʃi ʤʌst ʃrʌgz ænd sɛz ˈnʌθɪŋ.

ðə bʌs kʌmz, ænd əˈlɪsə ænd ˈɑˌveɪd gɛt ɑn. ðeɪ sɪt təˈgɛðər. əˈnʌðər ˈklæˌsmeɪt ˈtɑmi gɛts ɑn æt ðə nɛkst stɑp.

“baʊ taɪz ɑr fɔr bɔɪz!” ˈtɑmi sɛz. “doʊnt ju noʊ ðæt?”

“jɛs,” əˈlɪsə ˈmʌmbəlz.

naʊ ʃi ɪz ˈrɪli ɪmˈbɛrəst. ɔl ðə nu kɪdz wɪl θɪŋk ʃiz dʌm fɔr ˈwɛrɪŋ ə baʊ taɪ. ʃi wɪl æsk ðə ˈtiʧər wɛn ʃi gɛts tu skul tu hɛlp hɜr teɪk ɪt ɔf.

wɛn ðeɪ gɛt tu skul, əˈlɪsə ænd ˈɑˌveɪd wɔk əˈkrɔs ðə ˈpɑrkɪŋ lɑt təˈwɔrd ðə frʌnt dɔrz. əˈlɪsə hæz hɜr hɛd daʊn.

ˈsʌdənli, əˈlɪsə hirz, “ə baʊ taɪ! ðæts soʊ kul.” əˈlɪsə lʊks ʌp, ænd siz eɪ 7ˈtiˈeɪʧ ˈgreɪdər ˈlʊkɪŋ æt hɜr.

“wʌt?” əˈlɪsə sɛz.

“aɪ laɪk jʊər baʊ taɪ!” ði ˈoʊldər gɜrl sɛz. “ɪt ɪz ˈvɛri kul. ju mʌst bi ˈvɛri kriˈeɪtɪv.”

əˈlɪsə ˈdʌzənt fil ɪmˈbɛrəst ˌɛniˈmɔr. ʃi laɪks ˈbiɪŋ kriˈeɪtɪv. ʃi kænt weɪt tu ʃoʊ hɜr baʊ taɪ tu hɜr ɑrt ˈtiʧər.

wɛn wʌn ʌv hɜr ˈklæˌsmeɪts sɛz, “baʊ taɪz ɑr fɔr bɔɪz,” əˈlɪsə sɛz, “baʊ taɪz ɑr fɔr ˈɛvriˌwʌn. əˈspɛʃli ɪf ju ɑr kriˈeɪtɪv, laɪk mi!”

Comprehension Questions

**1.** What does Alyssa get at the department store?

1. art supplies
2. **a bow tie**
3. a pair of shoes

**2.** Alyssa is embarrassed by her bow tie for the first time when she meets her friend Aveed at the bus stop. Why does Alyssa become embarrassed by her bow tie?

1. **Aveed says that bow ties are for boys.**
2. Alyssa’s mom said that bow ties are for boys.
3. Aveed won’t speak to Alyssa when he sees her bow tie.

**3.** Alyssa does not feel embarrassed by her bow tie after she speaks with the 7th grader. Which evidence from the story supports this statement?

1. The older girl says to Alyssa, “I like your bow tie!”
2. One of Alyssa’s classmates says, “Bow ties are for boys.”
3. **Alyssa can’t wait to show her bow tie to her art teacher.**

**4.** What does Alyssa end up thinking about her bow tie?

1. **The bow tie shows that she is creative.**
2. The bow tie does not show how creative she is.
3. She should not have worn the bow tie to school.

**5.** What is a theme of this story?

1. **You shouldn’t be embarrassed for being creative.**
2. Only boys should wear bow ties to school.
3. Your parents know what is best for you.