

THE MOTH



Announcer: Let's give it up for our next storyteller, Diavian. A lot of love from the crowd, keep it coming.

[applause]

Diavian: Oh my God. Like, feeling my heart like drumming.

0:00:34.2 Okay. So, when I was younger, my mom was the only one to touch my hair, and that was one of two reasons. The first reason being I had partial alopecia, meaning that I had these bald spots that doctors told me I would never be able to grow my hair back, I'd never be able to braid my hair. And I felt really insecure, being a child, because I love my hair.

0:00:58.2 So, uh, but with some mom magic, it grew back. It grew back really healthy and I was so happy I didn't have bald spots anymore. But this leads me into the second reason why my mom only did my hair, because thick hair and a tender scalp, it doesn't mix. It don't mix.

So, whenever I saw a comb, whenever she wanted to do my hair, "Come on, let's braid your hair," I would run and like hide under the bed. There was no other option for me.

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So at one point, we both grew tired of this. I grew tired of running from her when I saw the comb. She got tired of trying to like yank my hair straight, because my hair was nappy when I was a kid. So — it still is, thank you. It still is. But she was like, "Know what? Screw it, I'm gonna give you a relaxer." So I'm like, "So you mean you don't have to comb my hair all the time? You don't have to braid it tight? I love it, can we do it now?"

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So, my hair's straight and I like it for elementary school to like middle school. It was in ninth grade when I went on YouTube and I started watching these natural hair videos. And I'm like, "Oh my gosh, look how nice this is. I want this." The girl, she had such long, pretty, curly hair. And I'm like, "Your hair can do this? I didn't know that." So I'm like, "I want this. I want long, curly hair." So I decided to go on the journey to becoming natural.

[applause]

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And I transition. And I decided that New Years of that year was when I was gonna cut my hair because new year, new me, new hair, right? So I decided that that was when I was going to cut my hair, but it didn't work out like that because it was around December 14th, and I was deep conditioning my hair, and I just

notice how, how nice those curls look with the conditioner on it.
And I was like, "What if I cut it now?"

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And so I do it. I look at the scissors that's on top of my mirror in the bathroom, and I'm like "I'm gonna do it. I'm gonna — I have to give myself a pep-talk, because if I don't, I'm not gonna do it. I'm gonna chicken out and it's not gonna happen." I'm like, "This needs to happen. My hair needs to be healthy."

And I'm like, "I'm gonna do it." So I grab the scissors and I start cutting it before I tell my parents, before I tell my mom. And I'm just like, "There's nothing she can do. If she doesn't like it, oh well, because it's in motion. You can't stop it. You can't."

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So, I cut the front of my hair and I'm like, "Mom, can you help me?" And she's like, "With what, washing it out?" And I'm like, "No, I want you to cut it." So, she's stunned, but she helps me. So, and I rinse off the conditioner, and I'm like, "Where are the curls? Like, my hair is no longer curly like I saw on the conditioner. It's poofy. It is shrunken." And I'm just like, "I didn't sign up for this. Where is my long, curly hair?" I didn't see it.

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So I go to my mom and I'm like, "Do you like it?" And she just looks at me like... And I'm like, "It's okay if you don't like it. You can tell me if you don't like it. You know I'm gonna cry, but you can tell me if you don't like it." But it doesn't matter what she thought because she's my mom. Your mom forever loves you, no matter what you do. It's your dad that's the problem.

So, I go to my dad. I'm conscious of all the times he told me "Your hair looks so much better when it's straight," or "your hair is so much better when your mom does it." And I'm, I'm nervous. I don't know what he's gonna say. So I walk into the kitchen, I'm like, "Daddy, do you like it?" And he looks "What did you do?" And I'm like, "I cut it. It's healthy now." And he's like, "You look like a mushroom."

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And I'm like, "What?!" So, I'm not a mushroom now. I guess he didn't like it. And at one point, I didn't like it either. But I remember it was summer youth, it was about last year and my hair was shrunken, and I couldn't deal with it. And I'm like, "This is crap. I don't wanna do this." So I wet my hair, put some gel in it. It's curly, but it's not long. It's not the curls that I wanted.

And so I'm like, "Screw it." I put the gel in my hair. I put it up in two bun buns in the front. And like, it's half up, half down. And I'm like, "This is gonna have to do. This is gonna have to get me through the day. It's hot. I don't want to do my hair."

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So, I tried to timidly walk past my dad, through the kitchen, to get out the door. I don't want to hear what he has to say. Last time he called me a mushroom. I don't know what he's gonna call me now. And I was right, because I walked past him and he's like, "Your hair..." And I'm expecting him to be like, "Go fix it." But he's like, "The buns, they look like ears. You look like a bear." And I'm like, "I'm a bear?" And I'm like, "Okay, I'll take that. That's a compliment. That's a compliment."

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And I go to work, and my friend who's working with me, she's Dominican. She got this real long, spiral curl hair. And I tell her every day, "If only I had your hair," every day. And she comes up to me and she's touching me. She's like, "Oh my gosh, your hair is so pretty. Look at the coils." And I'm like, "What do you mean? You sitting here with this flawless hair, right here, that took no effort, and you're talking about this hair that I did in like five minutes?"

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And she's just like, "You should embrace your coils more. They're so beautiful. I wish I had your hair." And I'm just, I'm shocked. And I'm like, "You want my hair?" And I'm like, "Wow."

And so, now I know that I can appreciate my kinks and my coils that, even though I was a mushroom, I am now a bear, and this is great.