

TAVI GEVINSON



BORN IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 1996

WHEN ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD Tavi Gevinson started her fashion blog, *Style Rookie*, she had no idea what it would lead to. She didn't *mean* to become one of the most well-known bloggers in the fashion world. She had no idea she'd end up sitting front-row at New York Fashion Week, hugging and cheek-kissing her fashion designer idols. And she definitely didn't think that four years after starting her blog, she'd be the editor in chief of the most popular online teen publication in the country. But that's what happened.

Tavi grew up with a love of performance and theater, which included a fondness for dress-up and costumes. She was interested in fashion and art from an early age and began experimenting with her outfits in sixth grade, wearing bright patterns, vintage clothes, funky shoes, and wild accessories. In middle school it felt like everyone was trying to fit in, wearing the same clothes from the same stores in the same malls. Tavi felt rejected by most of the cliques at school, and she decided that if she wasn't going to fit in, she'd just embrace that.

“If you are intimidated by the artists who came before you, understand you too have a place, right next to them.”

By creating a look all her own, Tavi felt free from the daily anxiety of having to look like everyone else. She mixed thrift-store clothes with oversized shirts borrowed from her siblings. She wore bright floral patterns and stripes and fringed vests and platform sandals. She dyed her blonde hair gray and often

topped off her looks with random headpieces like flower crowns, lace doilies, or enormous cartoonish hair bows.

It worked for Tavi, but it did *not* go over too well with her peers. Especially the boys, who teased her relentlessly. Sometimes they even seemed mad at Tavi for her outfits, like they were offended that she wasn't trying to impress them. Her reaction was to write down all the insults in her journals and then to wear something even weirder the next day. If a boy sneered at her and told her she looked like a freak, she'd show up the next morning wearing a tutu, silently daring him to tease her again.

“Fashion can be about having fun and expressing yourself—it doesn't have to be about being pretty.”

When Tavi learned about fashion blogs from a friend's older sister, she decided to start one of her own. It seemed like a fun way for her to document her outfits, her classmates' responses to those outfits, and her various pop-culture obsessions. She set up a simple blog and got started. Her first post was titled “The New Girl in Town”; it began, “Lately I've been really interested in fashion.” She posted regularly on her blog and on the blogs of fellow fashion-obsessed people. Tavi's quirky fashion sense combined with her unique writing style soon attracted lots of followers.

By the time Tavi was in seventh grade, *Style Rookie* had more than thirty thousand daily readers—and adults in the fashion world were paying attention to this girl in the Chicago suburbs. She even received invitations to attend New York Fashion Week, as well as fashion shows in Paris. While many in the fashion world adored her blog and loved meeting her, others were suspicious. It was hard for some adults to