

**IT'S  
DEEPER  
THE  
LOOK**



**THAN**

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This Book is Dedicated to my  
loving family.

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# -CHAPTER 1 -

Just like every girl in high school prom *is the social event* the day to show all your friends and foes who wore it best, to throw away all the stress from exams, homework and let your hair down, a night to let bygones be bygones with teachers and crazy faculty members you had senseless “beef” with. That wasn’t the case for myself, I never cared about how I looked at prom or made it a big deal (at first). Prom was more of a financial burden, which is why I was hesitant at first. My school was new, we were the first graduating class; Class of 2015 had absolutely no school spirit at all, I just wanted to win prom queen why? a bet between my older sister Chanel, my mother and I, they won prom queen in high school so they thought it can continue to run in the family. It was stated “If I win prom queen I wouldn’t have a curfew” and no one knows how badly I wanted to a night out on the town. If prom was just like *She’s all that* in 1999 or *Footloose* 1984 I was all for it. Of course, I had to find the perfect dress weeks before the “big day”. My mom didn’t have a job at the time so I had to find a way to earn money. I was the popular girl who sold baked goods, my cupcakes were so good the school safety, teachers *and* other schools in the building would buy from me. They called my cupcakes “Cup crack”. Yes, inappropriate but it had a ring to it. I manage to raise over 300 dollars in 3 weeks, I searched online day in and out to find the perfect cheap dress. Which didn’t exist. Until I had to lower my standards, I just wanted something out of the ordinary, *everyone* was wearing a Jovani or Sherri Hill inspiration dress high-low tutu sheer skirt with a sequin top, or a long-slit heart shape mermaid dress with more glitter and crystals the world can imagine. How can I look different and ball on a budget? I came across this Chinese oversea website called Light in a box, who had the perfect price for a dress \$100. As skeptical as I was It was I took a leap of faith and purchased the gown. What’s the worst that can happen? Accessorize it and just wear the dress rather than it wears me. My inspiration or reasoning for the dress was solely based on affordability and creativity. I figured if I’m going to be in the fashion industry or love fashion like Carrie Bradshaw then I would turn nothing into something. The gown came 10 days before prom It was a heart shape neckline, royal blue, mermaid dress with a very low slit in the front,

the train added additional 32-40 inch two-layer fabric. I wasn't certain of what the material was but the inner seam is satin. The gown was so snug and fitted it was difficult breathing that night. I manage to find the perfect contract color for shoes, pale pink sandal one strap heel I wanted something to pop since there was a slit in the front, what better way to show off my pedicure, pink has always worked well with my skin tone, to top it off a statement crystal necklace which harmonize well with my whole look, simple yet beautiful. I was happy because I stayed out all night walking through the door with the crown, endless memories, with long-term friends making it a night that I will always remember.



## -CHAPTER 2 -

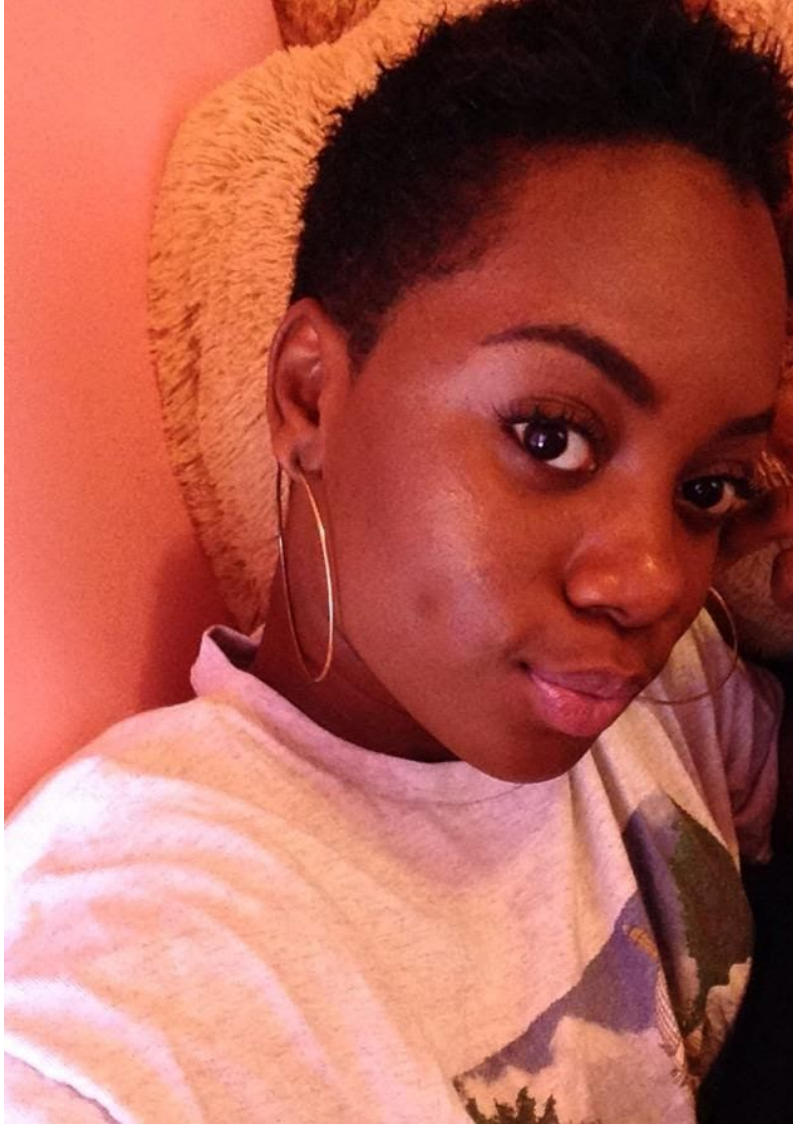
“Class Of 2015 we did it!” as I said gliding across the stage, grabbing my diploma and shaking my principle hand. I was so scared walking across since I wore my heels out on prom night. I also wore a floral satin full-skirted swing skirt, 50’s inspiration, paired with sleeveless crew neck white top which was tucked in. My clash inspiration behind my outfit was Sandy Olsson, also known as Sandy from *Grease (1978.)* One scene the new girl in town, her hair was styled in a neat up-do curled bangs and curled ponytail ends holding it with a yellow bow to correlate with her full skirted swing skirt, white collared shirt with a matching yellow cardigan. I loved how clean that look was. But I also was fascinated with the Sandy storyline, the new girl at school. I could relate because I was the new girl who fell for the handsome bad boy who turned out to be a sweet heart. Another inspiration is Carrie Bradshaw, it girl in town who’s very fashionable with her girly skirts as she plays with colors and fabric. I connect with these two characters, I was that new girl who was fashionable (who won best dress in high school), who had the bad boy/Mr. Big I had to pay homage, my last year as a high schooler.



-CHAPTER 3 -



Just like the leaves in autumn, my head shed off that October of 2015. "To new beginnings", closing my eyes as Margarita chops my hair off simultaneously as my boyfriend shakes his head in distaste at my decision to cut off my hair. At my short visit to the hair salon I caught myself thinking why am I cut my hair not just so I can be free of all damage but deeper than that I don't want to define hair as beauty. I felt I was beautiful enough to cut it all, stand up for a message I'm more beautiful than my hair. I was so scared If my boyfriend was going to leave me or think I'm ugly without hair. Although he told me my haircut didn't fit my face. I couldn't let that hold me back I stood by my decision. I was inspired by so many beautiful women who dealt with cancer or other sickness that cause them to lose their hair, their most beautiful curve on their body was their smile how courageous and happy they were regardless of the loss of their hair. Of course, I stood in the mirror countless times trying to talk myself into it, I rolled out of bed that morning walked over to Margarita hair salon I didn't care what I wore or if my face was painted on with makeup. Although it was autumn I blossomed like a flower into a strong young lady.



## -CHAPTER 4 -

Just like every thanksgiving morning in the Jeanmichel residence, Chanel receives a set of directions from my mom in preparation for her before coming home from work “boil the noodles, season the chicken.” Everyone in the house knows it’s noon when my mom gets home and is in the kitchen, because kompa or reggae is playing depending on her mood. Spices ate joint together for the first time creating a humming aroma dancing in the air all throughout the building. My mom yelling telling me to clean up or peel some potatoes, Caitlynn my youngest sister in her room playing fortnight. Through it all were in either our pajamas or house clothes. This thanksgiving was special to me my grandparents finally coming over to our home from Florida and I’ve been in a long-term relationship with my boyfriend so I had to wear something special, I didn’t want to overly dress up just for my living room. I just made a new wig jet black unit and I was dying to wear it my makeup look had to be identical as Jackie Anie, a YouTube influencer who shows different looks for women of color, she had a nude lipstick intense highlight on her cheek bone and dramatic lashes I increased the daily dose of mascara that night. I wore a turtleneck woven white dress with feathering or as some would say fuzziness which was incredibly itchy, smooth cotton black tights that balanced out how itchy I was at the top and my suede knee high boots that clicks every time I walk. Around 8pm family and friends gathered around a small 2-bedroom apartment home laughing, sharing stories while I sat impatiently by my phone expecting a text from him. Nine o clock rolls around and I called we had *a very* heated discussion ending the call with “*I’m on my way*” immediately my attitude changed as excited as I was to finally have a boyfriend and hang out with him during the holidays 10:30pm and he finally shown up where friends who once was laughing and enjoying my mom’s Haitian rice and my dad’s signature jerk pork left, only my grandparents stuck around. Something unusual about him that night, I assumed it was because of the argument but something brew deeper after a half a hour goes by he asked me to walk him outside. I sense tension so I asked and the words he uttered out were as cut throat and so cold my body went numb I could no longer feel the cheap the itchy fabric hear the clicks in my walk or feel the smooth lights that eased my discomfort, just numb to the words “It’s over”



## -CHAPTER 5 -

“My *very* first election, I can make a change, a difference with one single vote I have the power to change the world as I thought to myself that morning.” Every Morning I have a routine I get up, brushed my teeth, wash my face, put on my office attire and head out to work but on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Tuesday morning I had a different routine I woke up, ate breakfast, brushed my teeth, flossed, wash my face, put on makeup, straighten my hair and found my outfit. My mission was to appear important, to feel superior, but modern day business woman who has a spunky style. I decided to wear my black cool max blouse, cool max is a great material for anyone like myself who deals with stress sweat or anyone who deals perspiration. Along with my blouse, I incorporated dark blue jeans to illustrate how casual and comfy I am, I still couldn't help to think how plain jane I still look. My dark blue jeans had a h circle if light brown stitching where my hole once was on one of my back pockets. My mom re-stitched it with the wrong color thread my mom always sew all our clothes back together in the mist of giving my sisters and I a lecture on “Back in the day in Haiti...”as we all roll our eyes moaning to the tired speech repeatedly. I remember thinking what in my closet can brings some creativity but can remain professional my eyes scanned the closet noticing a floral blazer I purchase thrifting it's white, black and red a bit unusual for election candidates to wear fun prints but it was my own representation of Election Day. The blazer predominantly had red so I matched it with red suede flats that my aunt from Haiti gave me. I was ready to walk to the polls, regardless of how wet and gloomy it was that morning I felt I brought some smiles to individuals in my neighborhood to see a young woman of color with a good head on her shoulder, dress with such poise. I was doing it for myself, for my family back home in the Caribbean's, for any African American who didn't have the rights to vote. I finally made a different, a change.



-CHAPTER 6 -

All black, Black top, faux leather jacket, charcoal ripped up low rise jeans and styled with my Zara booties pointed tasseled heels. Had to represent Texas if I'm going to a Solange concert. My first real enjoyable concerts completely different from those school trips back in high school or the "I have a free ticket to a concert" of some unknown person. This was Solange Beyoncé sister that is often overlooked. Her album called "A seat at the table" debuted early 2016. The album was a series of songs that talks about the beauty and affiliation of being black, she'd been on tour for a year now and her last couple of shows were in New York City at radio hall. One song that became so inspirational was her number one song "Don't touch my hair" the song connected with me not because I cut my hair but because I transitioned into being natural, often I'm asked about my hair texture and comparing it to things like cotton or a fluffy cloud or a sponge, some even ask can they touch my hair. The song isn't all about don't touch her hair but goes in to say "Don't touch my soul

When it's the rhythm I know

Don't touch my crown

They say the vision I've found

Don't touch what's there

When it's the feelings I wear

They don't understand

What it means to me

Where we chose to go

Where we've been to know" (Solange, Track 9). These lyrics show what black person owns must protect, she makes it known in this song the culture of black people isn't to be tampered or even mimicked or taken lightly. Which is why I didn't wear a wig, I didn't want to insult Solange but to show her my crown, my natural hair to finally own it and not hide it to be *unapologetically* black.



-CHAPTER 7 -



As a influencer on YouTube and Instagram I am constantly ask to promote or test out someone items. I was approached by a company called Sojo eyewear they asked me to pick out a few glasses that I like, keep them, and if I like it promote it. I was shocked at first because I'm not one to wear eyewear especially since New York City has been gloomy lately but I felt it would be a great way to kick off 2019 with a mini shoot. I collaborated with my close friend and old coworker Gabrielle who is an inspiring photographer. I came up with two calm looks the sensory was downtown SoHo with the brick walls I wanted to wear a body on black off the shoulder dress to show off my curves and promote the new local boutique for plus size women called red dolls. This was so significant for me because it shows. Growth in my brand as well as my mental state, I gain so much weight in the last year I've notice major changes in my face and body. Show casing my insecurities wasn't my ideal plan but I needed to fight the constant thought of my body shape and live. I gain more from the shoot that day than just collaborating with two different brands and my friend but a deep meaning to keep growing and working hard on my brand no matter what circumstances your faced with that I am beautiful in any size or shape.



## -CHAPTER 8 –

Big twenty-one more responsibilities, more paperwork, but most importantly I can flash my ID to the bouncer and struts my stuff in and out of every pub, dive bar, night club and lounge. July 13,2018 my parent woke me up with a happy birthday song in their matching Christmas pjs in *the middle of the summer*, my mom with the water work tears I imagined they no longer looked at me as their baby girl 6 pounds 7 ounces. I had my whole day plan run errands in the morning: nail salon, Sephora, beauty salon, brow salon. The first half of my day I wore denim shorts, my yellow “It’s my crown day” shirt and sandals just for comfortability while I ran around. Yellow is my favorite color, I often don’t wear it but this day I had to. Days leading up to my birthday brunch I came across my cousin’s fiancé online boutique called Greige. The boutique offer new trendy pieces from everyday looks to special occasion attire, I noticed this full lace yellow two piece set the lace bandeau attached with off the shoulder lace bell sleeves the mini skirt had a built in nude slip so nothing would reveal. I didn’t have time to find shoes so I ore one of my old black heel with a transparent strap. I figured I didn’t want to overdue the two-piece set especially since it was my first time wearing yellow and lace. Along with stepping out of my comfort zone I dyed my extensions ash blonde. My nails were pink as usual to compliment my skin tone. It was crunch time my brunch reservation time was slowly approaching. Friends and family head over to the lounge venue as I was glowing through my yellow Greige two-piece set. On that special day, I witness firsthand what garments and colors can really do to a person mood, before I the brunch I was stressed but at the brunch I felt so happy analyzing the venue space surrounding myself around love ones who are so meaningful to my journey to womanhood.



## -CHAPTER 9-

3. 2. 1... Happy new year! The first new year's out on the town bringing it in without family. I brought my new year with good friends I've known for years. We decided to go to our friend's job Freehold for New year's prices usually sky rocket after the ball drops. I was well prepared for the night I had over six different dresses to choose from, slightly because they were dresses I purchased over the year or for NYE last year or the year before that when I didn't have plans or was old enough to partake in NYE celebration. It was between my last two silk mini dress, one foster green dress I purchased for my 20<sup>th</sup> birthday invisible side zipper, halter top strings Low drop cleavage and a very fitted mini skirt bottom, I want to wear where that dress solely because I wanted to finally put my money to use but it wasn't the proper timing to wear a dress of that exposure in the cold. The second option satin red wine long sleeve loose but fitted dress, with a cross over V neck, I wasn't fond of the material because it was low quality and a mix blend of satin and other material but It huge my body and hid some of my imperfections like skin or "fat" on my stomach from just living my life. I went with option number two not only because It was appropriate for the weather but also because I could officially wear my icy grey faux fur coat I purchase for thanksgiving that year before. I was so prepared for this New year's I could shop in my closet and find a new option every second of the way. Lastly It was hair and shoes my hair was platinum blonde so anything went well with a platinum blonde wig, in addition to everything working well with one another because I follow trends I was aware prints and patterns were in style so I wore my close toes snake skin lace up heels. I felt like a million bucks that New year night. I didn't have an inspiration other than 'go big or stay home.' My decisions were based on no longer obsessively buying things to stress events out. I often do that and catch myself unable to have fun or attend the event because I wasn't planning or budgeting my money the way It was needed. Many factors played into making this night a night to remember, I shopped my own closet for the first time, I saved money, enjoyed my night out *safety*, I hung out with friends, but because It was how effortless and stress free planning my outfit was for something as huge as New year outfit. Ever since that night I made promise to myself to never make a big deal out of an event always think smart and efficient then overly spend on dresses I can only wear in that there and now or wear only once.



## -CHAPTER 10 -

My name is Desiree Jeanmichel and I go to school at New York city college of technology, I am in my senior year at the college. I am the middle child and I come from two crazy in love supportive parents and crazy sisters who are smart, funny, and always up to something. I value every moment my busy family and I are in one room. Still. conversing about current events, or what's on television, cracking jokes on each other, to even laughing sharing "remember when stories". Now a day those days are usually during the holidays since everyone older and have a separate life of their own. Every Christmas morning our mom gifts us matching pajamas which became our own family tradition, it brings us together no matter what issues or minor arguments my family and I had once we put on our pajamas it's like all our anger or disagreements just disappears

