

# For the Love of Grace, Style and Friends



Written and Illustrated by: Grace Nunekpeku

For the Love of Grace, Style and Friends

## PROLOGUE

I wrote this book as a reminder of how my personality and character is formed in the way that I dress. For as long as I can remember, I have always shown my love for fashion through the adornment of jewelry, and implementation of dress. Ever since a young child my mother made sure I looked fashionable for events, church, parties and public gatherings. She is the one that introduced fashion to me and is the one that instilled the love of fashion into my life. As a young child she helped me pick out clothes but still gave me room to express myself.

Even though my style is still changing, I believe the freedom my mom gave me helped me to be comfortable in my own skin. My hope to the readers of my book is that they can get an insight of who I am and who I aspire to become. By writing this book and sharing my stories, my desire is that people can connect with me and be more comfortable with who they are and who they aspire to be.

## **FOREWORD**

My name is Natalie Young and I am a close friend of Grace. I had the pleasure of meeting her in middle school and I have known her for nearly sixteen years of my life. Over the past sixteen years I have learned so much about Grace. From her kind hearted personality and fashion, I can say that her style of dressing depicts who she is. After reading the chapters in her book, I can say this book is a true representation of who she is. It is true that her style has changed over the years but one thing that has not is how she lights up a room with her character and the way she is able to put clothes together. She has grown into a beautiful young lady and I cannot wait to see all that she has to offer to this world.

One thing I've watched Grace do is smile and shine even during hard times she has faced in her life. She is strong and does not look like what she has been through. I love how positive and optimistic she is no matter what the circumstances are. Grace effortlessly, is a source of light and she somehow always brings out the best in people she comes across. She is truly the meaning of her name and I hope through her book, you are able to see my friend in that same light.

-Natalie Young

## Table of Contents

1.	It's a celebration everytime we link up....	6
2.	Galentines.....	9
3.	Summer aesthetics.....	11
4.	Creme de la creme.....	14
5.	Two pops of color.....	17
6.	Lost in paradise.....	20
7.	The five.....	23
8.	A pandemic birthday.....	26
9.	Prada or nada.....	29
10.	Lights! Camera! Smile!.....	32
11.	It's a good day to wear green.....	35
12.	New years.....	38
13.	Everything that sparkles.....	41
14.	A special birthday.....	44
15.	It's a good day for street style.....	47

## Chapter 1

### **It's a celebration everytime we link up.**

The year 2020 took an unexpected turn in march when the Covid- 19 disease made its way to the United States and wreaked havoc. For a couple of months places like restaurants, schools and places of worship were completely closed. Finally, in May of 2020 things started to open back up. My friend Juanita's birthday was in October and having not seen her for a couple of months, celebrating her birthday was a great reason to hang out and catch up like old times. I, Juanita and other dear friend Alexandria made plans for dinner at Catch Steak located at 88 9th Avenue, New York, NY 1001. This was the first time the three of us met for dinner in the city, and though things were different due to the pandemic, we still had a good time.

After my shower, it was time to get dressed. I had a weave in at the time that reached my lower back so, I curled it for some volume. Despite the fact that I had to wear a mask until we were seated at our table, I still did my makeup. I went for a natural glam look that way if some of my makeup rubbed off my face and got on the mask, I would still look presentable.

My choice of dress was a mini ruched poplin dress in the color apple green that I bought from zara. The dress was asymmetrical and had a piece of fabric you tie in the front. The dress was made from a synthetic fabric and contained elastane in it which made it stretchy and comfortable. All those months stuck in the house and wearing flat shoes made it awkward to wear high heels so I opted for a shorter pair which were roughly 4 inches high. They were black caged heels that had laces you tie around your

ankles. To bring the look together I sprayed some of my Tom Ford Black Orchid perfume and I was ready for the night.

This was one of the first times I got dressed up to go anywhere so I was pretty excited. This was also one of the first times I wore a mini, fitted dress after lockdown. The first time I wore the dress, the zipper popped and I thought this was due to me gaining a small amount of weight during lockdown. But after going to the tailor and having to replace the zipper with a better one, I was able to fit the dress perfectly. I felt very pretty that evening; it was my first time getting dolled up. I remember feeling a rush of confidence once I got completely dressed and looked in the mirror. I honestly felt like the “it” girl and I felt unstoppable.





## Chapter 2

### **Galentines**

For as long as I can remember my friends Juanita, Alex and I always celebrated valentine's day every year together. On the 13th of February 2021, we made plans to celebrate again once more. We met for brunch at Laduree and then walked around Soho, took some pictures and did a little shopping. Laduree is an upscale bakery with Parisian origins. They specialize in French macarons and are located on 864 Madison Avenue New York NY 10021.

As I was getting ready, I realized that I did not want to wear any makeup because we were going to be out all day. I just made sure that my face was moisturized and I applied some lip gloss. My hair was pretty simple too. I parted it down the middle and curled it for some volume. I was looking a bit too simple so I accessorized with a gold pair of earrings and a gold necklace with my initials "GN" on it.

It was a cold day so I needed to bundle up to stay warm. I wore a faux fur, v-neck collared long sleeve top, faux leather khaki pants; both which I got from H&M. I also knew that we were going to walk around the city, so I wore my Nike blazer sneakers for comfort and support. To make sure I stay warm throughout the day I wore my long black faux fur coat I bought from Mango. For protection against Covid- 19 I wore my black mask and to bring the look together I wore my red, black and cream tweed leather gucci mini dionysus.

I remember walking around the city so surprised at how empty Soho looked. I felt like I was in a strange place; like the Soho I once knew was no more. I remember us taking pictures with our masks on because we were scared of getting sick if we took it off while in public.



## Chapter 3

### **Summer aesthetics**

One day I was shopping on H&M's website and I came across this white oversized v-neck collared top and oversized shorts summer set. I usually like buying loose fitted shorts so I was very excited when I saw this outfit. I bought it during spring but I never got the chance to wear it until summer came around. I figured it would be a great outfit for the summer because it was oversized, airy and comfortable. In my mind I envisioned wearing this outfit as a casual yet chic look and that's exactly what I did. Ever heard of the "rich auntie vibes"? That's the look I was going for.

On the day I wore this outfit I was running errands with my boyfriend Ola. He had bought the two of the same pair of jeans from Kith and asked me to go with him to the store to exchange one of the pairs of jeans with him. It was a hot summer day so I put extra deodorant on and sprayed my Tom Ford Soleil Blanc eau de toilette on to make sure I smelled fresh and clean all day. I also put on some sunscreen to avoid getting sunburned and I applied a good amount of lotion on my legs to avoid being ashy.

I remember at the time, my hair was braided into cornrows with extensions inserted throughout the hair and I used a scrunchy to tie it up as a low ponytail. For accessories, I wore gold chunky hoops, my gold JBW watch, a white pair of cult gaia sunglasses and a gold anklet wrapped around my right foot. I also wore this white inspired faux leather, bottega veneta pouch I bought from asos and a cream pair of faux leather mules I bought from boohoo.

I think what I liked most about that outfit was the way it made me feel. I am a petite, curvy young lady and finding garments that fit can be an inconvenience at times. I usually

wouldn't wear shorts either because I never felt comfortable in them, but when I tried on this pair, it felt right. This white set made me feel like a million bucks. The color white screams luxury, and class to me and that's how I felt in this outfit.



## Chapter 4

### **Creme de la creme**

Over the summer of 2021, seven of my friends and I went to Jamaica to celebrate our friends Alex and Tiffany's birthday. Alex and Tiffany were born a day apart from each other so they wanted to celebrate together. Before we flew to Jamaica, we were told to bring with us an all white outfit for the birthday dinner. We stayed in a resort called Bahia Principe Grand Jamaica which had different restaurants. The name of the restaurant we went to is Orquidea, which serves international dishes from Jamaica.

I prepped days before traveling to Jamaica to make getting ready in the morning a breeze. I modified my nails by getting acrylic over my natural ones to add some length and I got a pedicure with white nail polish for a clean summer look. I also modified my eyelashes by getting individual eyelashes placed on my natural ones for length and volume also. This made getting ready in the morning breeze. The third day of our trip was when my friends wanted to have their dinner and by then I had gotten a tan from the hot sun. I looked at myself in the mirror and I knew the color of this dress would compliment my skin complexion. For the trip I had long braids that were long past my waist. The name of the hairstyle I did is knotless braids. Knotless braids are when extension is added to your natural hair without creating a knot at the base by starting with your own hair and then wrapping the extension around, and braiding to the length you desire. That particular evening was really hot so I wrapped my braids into a bun. I also applied foundation to my face for an even complexion. I highlighted the bridge of my nose, under my eyes, my forehead and chin to enhance the higher zones of my face. I also contoured my nose, cheekbones, and jawline to enhance those features. I set my face with setting spray to prevent my makeup from rubbing off and reduce shine. I applied some fenty beauty lip gloss in



the shade “hot chocolit” to keep my lips moisturized. I inserted my gold hoop earrings in and my pinky ring and middle finger ring on and I suspended my necklaces on my neck.

My choice of dress was a white long sleeve crinkle viscose and nylon-blend, twill short dress. It was an open spread collared dress but the neck line was too deep for my liking so I took it to my tailor to close it up a bit. The dress also had a concealed button closure which allowed me to put it on easily . The bottom on the dress was asymmetrical; meaning the right side of it was slightly longer than the left side, and was also lined at the bottom to ensure it was not see through. Last but not least, the dress had a gathering and detailing at the waist.

I felt pretty, and elegant on the night that I wore this dress. I remember getting compliments from my friends and the staff at the restaurant. I felt confident and it showed in the pictures I took. I was overwhelmed with emotion that I was smiling all night. I felt bright and vibrant despite the color of the dress being white. Due to the fact that we were all wearing white, I was worried we would all look the same but it was the exact opposite. We all looked different and beautiful in our own way, simultaneously giving me a sense of peace and belonging.





## Chapter 5

### **Two pops of color**

Due to the weather being hot in Jamaica, and the morning being the brightest and cooler time of the day, my friend Juanita and I came up with the plan of waking up early in the morning to take content pictures for our social media accounts. This idea allowed us to take pictures all throughout the Bahia Principe Grand Jamaica resort without any unwanted people in the background because most of the guests were sleeping. It also allowed us to truly enjoy our days around our friends without having to worry about taking the perfect picture and missing out on all the fun. I planned each outfit for each day and for the fourth day of our stay at the resort, I wore a green and orange outfit.

I woke up about fifteen minutes earlier than Juanita to iron my dress to take away any wrinkles that may have been on the dress. After, I took my shower and started to get ready. It was important for me to put lotion on, and apply sunscreen on at least ten minutes before putting on the dress. The fabric that the dress was made out of absorbs oil and I didn't want to stain the dress. Before applying makeup on, I suspended a towel around my neck from preventing accidental spills from getting on the dress. For my hair I simply wrapped one of the braids I had in around the hair to suspend them into a ponytail.

The dress I am speaking of was a grass green mini satin dress with a drape skirt detail I bought from asos.com. Normally I am a size 4 but due to the reviews I read when I was ordering the dress, I went up a size. This turned out to be the wrong thing to do because I ended up taking it to the tailor for proper sizing. Around this time the color green and orange were trendy so I decided to put them together to create a monochrome look. I wore my orange, beaded satin attico heels and accessorized with a green mini bag with gold handle details.

It was so hot that morning, and the humidity was unbearable. Ironically, everything that I did to prevent the dress from getting stained served no purpose. As soon as we stepped foot outside the hotel I started to rapidly sweat and the under arm area of the garment started to stain. Juanita and I were taking turns shooting each other but we realized the only way I could get a good picture would have to be if I took all my pictures first without taking breaks. My makeup started to melt off my face also and I began to get nervous because I only had one shot at getting this picture right. So we did some test shots really quickly and realized that I had to keep my hands down in order for the stain to not be seen in the photos and the makeup that was melting off looked like I was going for a natural dewy makeup look. In the end everything worked out great and I was satisfied with the photos I took.



## Chapter 6

### **Lost in paradise**

It was our last night at the Bahia Principe Grand Jamaica resort and our last dinner there too. We all got dressed and headed downstairs to the Orquidea restaurant. We were all hungry that evening because we did a lot of activities from riding on horses through the ocean to taking a swim in the luminous lagoon. We were supposed to have a quick dinner before heading to bed but we stayed, talked and laughed until the restaurant closed. We laughed at the crazy adventures we had and started to plan our next vacation.

We just got back from swimming with fishes in the luminous lagoon and before anything else I had to take a shower. My skin was dry from spending so much time in the salty water at the beach and lagoon, so I applied my nivea intensive care cocoa body oil over my lotion to lock in moisture. For this night I went for an extravagant, yet classy look. I wrapped my knotless braids into a messy bun, applied my face primer and setting spray to prevent my makeup from slipping off, and inserted my gold hoop earrings. I proceeded to put my bracelet, pinky, and middle finger ring on. Last but not least I sprayed my Tom Ford Soleil blanc eau de toilette on. It is described to be the perfect paradise vacation captured in an elegant frosted glass bottle and I couldn't agree more.

My choice of dress was a backless blue marble print mesh figure hugging midi dress I bought from pretty little. It had an underbust corset detail and had a lining to prevent the fabric from being seen through and of the mesh fabric, the dress was easy to slip into. The dress had a set of strings that I used to suspend it up by tying the strings together around my neck. Although the dress was dominantly blue, it had other colors creating a marble effect which were cream, black, brown and beige. The dress was meant to be the center of attention so I kept my

accessories simple. I wore black strappy heeled sandals that had gold detailing and I held a beige clutch.

I was happy with how this outfit turned out. Not only was it pretty, it was also the most comfortable outfit I wore on this vacation. Although the dress was long it was breathable and I didn't have to worry about getting uncomfortable after consuming food because the mesh fabric was also stretchy and expandable. I was complimented by my friends and I knew my friends truly liked my outfit because they asked where I bought the dress and heels from. As I sat at the dinner table I remember feeling content with the beautiful adventures my friends and I got to experience, and I can wait for the next adventure that awaits us.





## Chapter 7

### **The five**

During the fall season of 2021, I decided to take my content creator work seriously. I planned out five looks and with the help of my boyfriend Ola, I was determined to get pictures in all five of my outfits. For content creators, location, aesthetic and lighting is just as important as the outfits and the place I picked was the Downtown Brooklyn area. The time I was supposed to start taking my pictures was 2pm but my boyfriend was running late and by the time we got to our first location it was already golden hour so I knew we had to move fast. Time was not on our side, and eventually the only pictures I was able to take and post were the ones of my first outfit.

Before the shoot I made sure to pack all my clothes in an order that would allow me to change in the car, but I already had my first outfit on. As I was getting ready at home, I made sure to iron my top and pants. I applied my makeup to enhance my features by using fenty beauty products. Due to the fact that I was going to change into different outfits, I kept my makeup neutral in order for it to go with each look. I had my hair braided into knotless braids but I styled it into a half up, half down look. To achieve this look, I wrapped the front section of my hair into a ponytail and kept the back section of my hair down.

My first outfit was a top and bottom set. The fabric itself was beige but had hints of different shades of orange and brown all over it. The top had long sleeves with a collared neckline, and the pants were long and wide legged. The pants were made for taller people so, I had to take it to a tailor and have him trim a couple of inches off so it could be wearable. This top and bottom set was made out of one hundred percent polyester chiffon making the outfit flowy. To complete the look I wore my attico orange muled heels that are about three and a half inches long, and I paired it with my brown pouch.

Even though I was disappointed that I couldn't take pictures of all my outfits, I was happy with my first look. Everytime that I dress up my main goal is to look sophisticated, never doing too much but just enough. The outfit was meant to look effortless even though I put a lot of thought into it. In the picture, you can see the rays of the golden hour sun shining down on me. I was proud of myself because I did not let the disappointment I felt deep inside the portray in my picture but instead showed how elegant and free I felt.





## Chapter 8

### **A pandemic birthday**

The fifth of January 2021, was my twenty-fifth birthday and I wanted to celebrate it big. I remember the year before that I was talking amongst friends and family and sharing my ideas on what I planned to do. Everyone was so excited, but then the pandemic happened. I had to cancel all plans and start anew. Luckily, restaurants opened back up but on the condition that customers only could eat outside. I couldn't invite all my friends to my birthday dinner so my boyfriend Ola and I went to Casa la Femme located on 140 Charles Street, New York, NY 10014. It was freezing cold that evening but the place installed heaters above our seats and near our feet to keep us warm.

Dinner was at 8pm but I had to start getting ready by 5pm. I took a shower, applied some moisturizer on to keep my skin from getting dry and started to get ready. My birthday dress was extravagant so I went with a simple hairstyle. Weave extensions were attached to my hair and cut into a bob and was then flat ironed for a clean smooth finish. I applied foundation, concealer, and highlights on my face for an even complexion and also applied some eyeshadow to my eyelids and black mascara for a more elaborated look. I set my makeup with setting spray so that it would not budge all night and started to get dressed.

First I put on my black stockings which were suspended around my ribs due to the elasticity of them. I then went ahead to put my dress on. It was a silver reflective corset off the shoulder mini dress. It was the tightest dress I have ever worn and it had no stretch whatsoever. I remember fearing that I wouldn't be able to zip the back of it up because of how tight it was. To compliment the dress, I wore a black suede Louboutin that had multicolored swarovski crystals on it and paired it with a silver clutch.

I felt beautiful and petite in my dress. I was glad that it was able to fit despite the fact that it was tight because of the corset. The dress was also reflective that even in the night time, it was still glistening. It's one of those garments that I will never give away because of how beautiful I felt in it. I bought and tried on a couple of dresses before I tried this one on and I can say it was the perfect dress to welcome my twenty-fifth birthday because it was everything I wanted and more.





## Chapter 9

### **Prada or nada**

I heard that the best way to buy luxury items sometimes is to buy it preowned. One day as I was scrolling through theRealReal ( an online and brick-and-mortar marketplace for authenticated luxury consignment), I came across this beautiful pre-owned prada coat. I saved it to my favorites and was debating on whether to buy it or not. One summer day, as I went through my “favorites” list on the website I saw that the coat had not been sold so I went ahead and bought it. I waited impatiently, for weeks for the fall season to arrive so I could finally wear my coat. Fall finally came around and my boyfriend Ola and I were going out to dinner at the Tao restaurant located at 92 9th Avenue, New York, NY 10011. I put together the perfect outfit to wear with my new, pre-owned prada coat, ready to strut on the streets of New York.

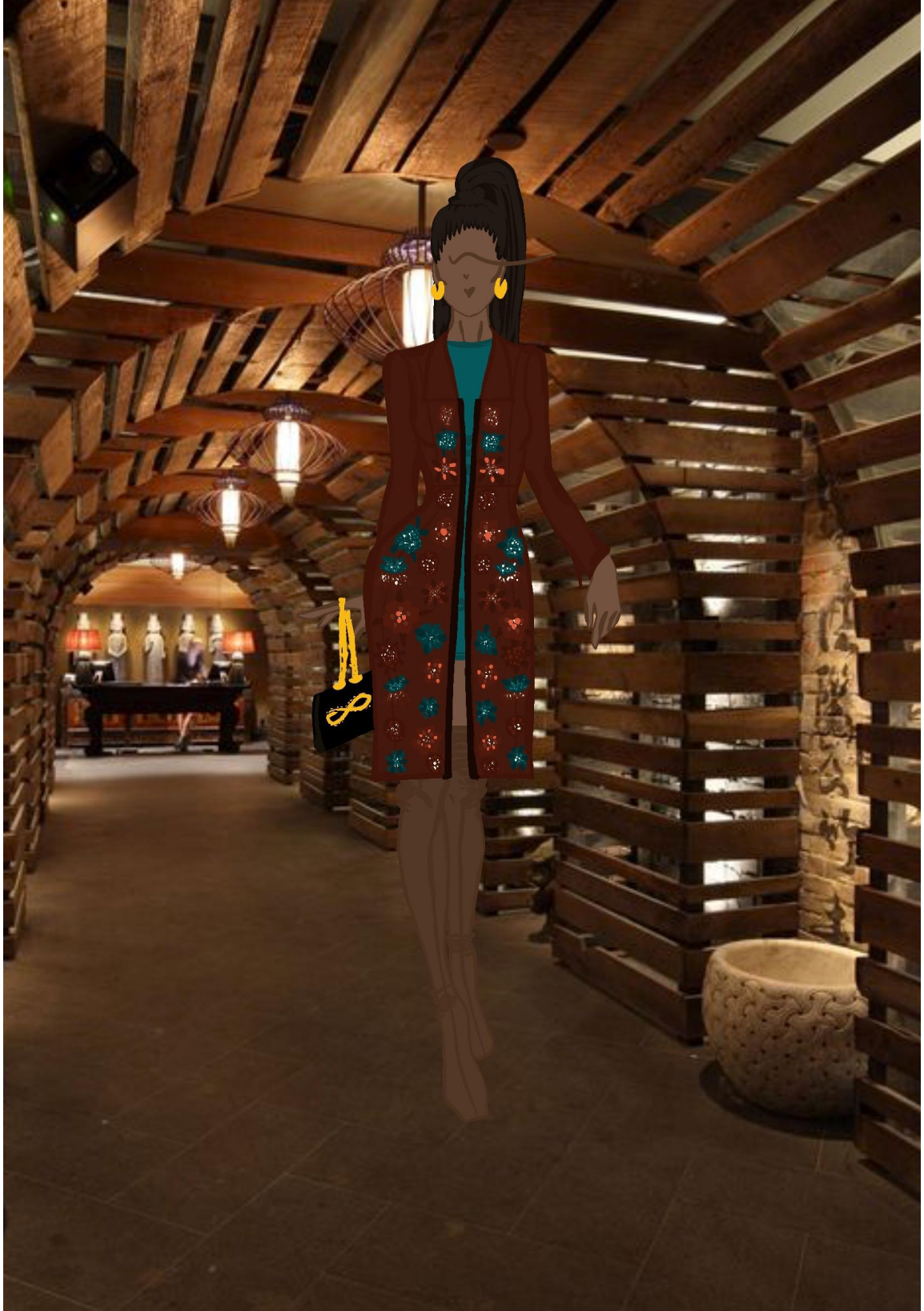
Dinner was at 7pm so I started getting ready by 4pm. I took a shower, brushed my teeth, moisturized, applied deodorant and some makeup on my face and started to get dressed. I put my long knotless braids into a simple half up, half down hair style by wrapping the front portion of my braids into a ponytail and leaving the back section down. I did not wear a lot of jewelry that day except for my gold pair hoop earrings that I inserted into my left and right ears. I did this because the coat was more of an art piece to me and I wanted it to be the center of attention.

The knee-length coat was brown and made out of wool. It was beaded and was full of multi-colored sequin and crystal accents that were perfectly placed to make the shape of flowers that went down on the front of the coat except for the arms leaving them plain. It had a pointed collar, hidden pockets on each side and had snaps for closure. To compliment the coat I wore a dark green, soft jersey long sleeve top and mini skirt set, and a brown faux leather, four inch,

over the knee boots. To bring everything together, I wore a black clutch that has gold metal straps.

I felt very confident and daring when I wore this coat. I remember walking with my head held a little higher, my posture changed. I felt like a model wearing not only a luxurious piece of art but a limited one. This is a coat that is rare to find and I was happy to have it as part of my collection. I felt strong and unstoppable because this was one of the biggest investments I made purchasing a luxury item.





## Chapter 10

### **Lights! Camera! Smile!**

When I was younger, my father would take pictures of me for my birthday in our garden back home in Togo, Africa. He would buy me the biggest cake and bouquet possible, I would sit behind the cake at the table, hold my bouquet of flowers, smile and get my picture taken. Sadly when I came to America, the birthday picture tradition stopped but for my twenty sixth birthday, I decided to bring the tradition back to life. I hired a professional photographer and went to the studio which is located in downtown brooklyn. I originally thought my photoshoot was on the 13th of december but it was on the 12th of december. It wasn't until the day before the photoshoot, that I realized I mixed up the dates.

My hair was not done for my photoshoot. What was I going to do? I still had my knotless braids in. They were starting to look old and I knew they would not look nice in the pictures. I stayed up half the night to take all my braids out. On the morning of the shoot, I detangled my hair, washed, blow dried it, and braided it into straight back cornrows. I took a shower, applied moisturizer on because to prevent my skin from looking dry in the pictures. I applied my makeup using my favorite products from fenty beauty and applied individual eyelashes on to enhance my features. I braided about 12 cornrows because I was going to wear a wig and I needed it to lay as flat as possible. As I put the wig on, I made sure to insert pins on the wig to the sides of my head, making sure that the pins were attached to my braids.

Because my wig was curly and voluminous, I wore big but dainty gold earrings. I also wore a dainty gold necklace and a gold bracelet. I also attached acrylic nails on my actual fingernails, elongating them and painted them a blush nude. I also got a pedicure and had my toes painted a light shade of pink. My dress of choice was a slip on maxi, cowl neck, spaghetti



strap abstract floral dress that dragged slightly to the floor. It also opened back with a self-tie back feature, and was lined to conceal construction details and raw edges of the polyester fabric.

I was running around the entire day trying to make sure everything was in order for my photoshoot. I took an Uber to get to the studio and it was there that I changed into my dress. I only got a quick look at myself before my pictures were taken but once I saw the final edited pictures, I was happy. I remembered those days when my father used to take pictures of me. I sent him a couple of the pictures I had gotten taken and he was also very happy to see the outcome.



## Chapter 11

### **It's a good day to wear green**

It was one of those days where time was moving a little too fast. I was trying to get some content for my instagram account and while chasing the sun for some good lighting my boyfriend and I forgot to eat. After getting all the content we wanted, we looked up places near us that offer brunch. We found a couple of places but our stomachs led us to a place called Flipper's located at 337 W Broadway, New York, NY, 10013. Flipper's is a restaurant that specializes in brunch and souffle pancakes.

I had just gotten my hair braided in a knotless hairstyle and I wrapped it all into a ponytail. I did my everyday makeup look by applying my fenty beauty liquid foundation, highlighting and contouring. To set my face I used my setting powder and then spray. Last but not least I applied my mascara to enhance and elongate my eyelashes and applied lipgloss on my lips to keep them from drying up in the cold winter breeze.

On this day I wore bottega green which is my absolute favorite color. My choice of outfit was a green and black silhouette zebra striped mesh turtleneck top. It was a long sleeve fitted silhouette that had thumbhole detail that allowed me to put my thumb in the sleeves. At the bottom I wore a black shiny faux leather high waisted wide leg pants that I took to the tailor to trim some inches off the bottom since they were too long. I wore green pointed toe heels that were three inches high which matched the green in my top and to bring the look together I added my mini black faux leather clutch bag.

This outfit is one of my favorite looks that I have put together so far as a content creator. In fact the brand of the top that I was wearing (shopafirm) loved my outfit so they put my picture up on their instagram page. I felt proud when I saw what happened, and even more proud for

coming up with a look that a brand that has a huge following liked. Before that day I used to doubt whether I was good enough to be a content creator but after, I saw that I was. I realized that we all have to start somewhere and also understood that the more content I put out, the better I would become.





## Chapter 12

### New Years

Everyone has a new year's resolution and mine this year was to wear the clothes that have been hanging in my closet and what better way to start bringing my resolution into fruition than by wearing a dress that had been sitting in the back of my closet for two years. For New Years, everyone at my church dresses in some of their best garments for service. Each year, Greater Zion Deliverance Tabernacle located in Jamaica Queens New York does a midnight service where people gather as a community to pray to God, and thank him for the year that has passed and for the new year to come. Days before the service I looked high and low for the perfect new year dress but could not find anything I liked until I went shopping in my own closet.

I was rushing home from work that night to quickly take a shower, get dressed and go. I bought a dress on my way home from work because I wanted to wear something new. It was a black sequin dress but as soon as I tried it on I saw how bad the silhouette of the dress was. I was running out of time but I knew that somewhere, in the back of my closet there was a dress perfect for the occasion. I quickly went through my clothes, found the dress, ironed it and put it on.

My choice of dress was a sky blue long sleeve midi button down dress with pointed collars, and a cinched in waist. It also had silver filament intertwined within the blue filament fabric. This made the dress sparkle ever so lightly. To compliment the dress, I inserted my silver hoop earrings into my ears, and suspended my silver necklace around my neck. I was going for a monochrome look so I paired my dress with a sky blue mini faux leather bag, and a pointed toe pair of heels that had a bow at the top of it. Finally, because I was going to be in a public place I put on my black face mask to protect myself and others from the Covid 19 virus.

The day I least expect to wear this garment was the day it was most useful to me. If there was a time I felt grateful to have a closet full of clothes, it definitely would be this one. I felt that I dressed appropriately for the occasion; everyone looked nice and so did I. I was glad to have this dress in my closet to save the day. In this dress I felt confident, sophisticated and no one could tell me otherwise.



## Chapter 13

### **Everything that sparkles**

January 4th was the day before my birthday. Out of nowhere with no symptoms I got really sick to the point where I had to cancel my birthday dinner plans with my boyfriend. On the day of my birthday, I woke and felt like nothing had ever happened and I was completely fine so another reservation was made for the 6th. My boyfriend and I went to Wild Ink, a restaurant located at 500 W 33rd Street, New York, NY.

I started to get ready after taking my shower. Naturally, I have 4c kinky hair but that night I wanted a slicked back ponytail. In order for me to achieve this look I had to flat iron my hair. I first used heat protection spray to protect my hair from heat damage and blow dried it to make it less kinky. This process makes it easier to part my hair and allows the flat iron to run through my hair more smoothly. I commenced the slow process of flat ironing my hair by first parting my hair in small portions, applying beeswax to the small section and then flat ironing the area once or twice until I completed my entire head. I went ahead to part my hair in the middle and put it into a ponytail. I then inserted braiding extensions into my hair to make it longer and platted it until it reached my waist. I then wrapped two rubber bands around the end of the braid and to make the end of it curly I wrapped a curling rod around it, dipped it in hot water and voila!

My dress was a fuschia sequins cowl neck, mini spaghetti strap dress. Because the dress was short, I did not want it to be tight on me so I ordered one size up. The length of the strap was longer than expected and showed too much of my chest than I would like so I took it to the tailor. She made the straps shorter which brought the dress up to cover my chest to my liking. I also wore a pair of black shorts underneath the dress because of how short it was. I inserted my

silver arched earrings into my ears, strapped on my silver, rhinestone sandal heels on and then suspended my silver swarovski crystal clutch in my hands.

Even though I looked pretty that evening, I would say not all that glitters is gold. I was self cautious because of how short the dress was. I remember I had to maneuver in a certain manner when getting up from my chair. I was also a bit uncomfortable because the sequins on the dress kept rubbing against my skin and irritated it. My heels also became uncomfortable because the rhinestones were digging into my skin as well. I knew I was not going to be out for long so I just dealt with how uncomfortable I was and took them off when I got to the car.





## Chapter 14

### **A special 365**

It was the 8th of January, three days after my birthday. This was a very special birthday for me, not only because I was turning twenty six but because I got a chance to celebrate it exactly the way I imagined. In 2021 we were still quite heavily in the middle of a pandemic. Around that time, restaurants were closing early and it was unsafe to invite a group of people out together. So this year, with things calming down a bit and looser restrictions put in place, I was able to invite my close friends to dinner. I made a reservation for ten people at the Cathedral; a french restaurant located at 112 E 11th Street New York, NY 10003.

I started to get ready after taking my shower. Because my hair was previously straightened, I just ran the flat iron around the front of my hair to straighten it more as it got a little wavy after a couple of days of wear. I repeated the process until I finished, and then I brushed my hair back, put in a ponytail and wrapped it into a bun. I also inserted pins into the bun to secure it and stop it from undoing itself. After I finished doing my hair, I did my makeup and added extra setting spray to my face to prevent it from getting oily.

My birthday is in early January which means by late November, I am looking for my birthday dress. This is because I am an indecisive person and it takes me a while to find what I like. I was looking online and eventually came across the most beautiful dress I have ever laid my eyes on. I was a fuschia heavily beaded fringed midaxi dress. It was v-necked and sleeveless. On the model, the dress was exactly as described in length; it was midaxi, meaning that it sat just above the ankle and below the mid-calf. When the dress arrived and I tried it on I realized that it was longer on me because the model was taller than I was. I am 5'1 so the dress reached my ankles and because the fringes were long the one near the bottom of the dress slightly dragged to

the floor when I was not wearing heels. I thought the dress looked even nicer due to this default. Last but not least, the dress was heavy; it was the heaviest thing I have ever worn and it is because of the beaded fringes. To complete the look, I inserted my small silver studs, suspended my silver watch to my left wrist and wore my dior satin fuchsia pointed toe heels on.

I felt graceful and beautiful on that night in my dress. Strangers complimented me and asked where I got the dress from. One of the ladies working at the restaurants insisted that I take pictures and videos. In one of the videos she asked me to shimmy so the dress would move and it was so much fun! Usually I tend to hide from attention but that night I did not care, I wanted everyone to know it was my birthday just by the dress I was wearing! I was the happiest person in the place that night. It was and still is a special night for me and I am so grateful to have spent it with loved ones.





## Chapter 15

### **It's a good day for street style**

The 31st of January, 2022 was my first day of class at New York City College of Technology. Because of the pandemic, classes went remote and professors and students met on zoom. For more than a year this was how I took classes and it started to feel like the normal thing to do. This spring semester was the first time I would step foot into the school building. I was going to my Trend and Forecasting class and I wanted to make sure that I looked nice and up to par.

It was a Monday and class started at six in the evening so I began to get ready around three thirty in the afternoon. I first looked for my clothes and shoes and how they were wrinkled because I folded them and put them away so I went ahead to iron them. After this I went to take a shower, moisturized and put some deodorant on and started to get dressed. I checked the weather and saw how cold it was going to be so I took a gray long sleeve cotton shirt out of my drawer and put it on before I put my sweater over it. Before putting on the rest of my clothes I put on my gold hoop earrings by inserting them into my ears and suspended my gold necklaces onto my neck.

My choice of clothes was a white crew neck sweater with long light blue high waisted straight leg jeans. The sweater was oversized and had a dark green upside down triangle stitched on it. Within the triangle, at the bottom right were three oranges grouped together. At the top of the triangle was written "Sport Class" and bottom were the words "Casablancas". The jeans I wore were a bit long and baggy at the bottom and they fell perfectly onto my sneakers. Speaking of sneakers, the pair I chose to wear were my Jordan 1 which is silver, black and white and had the Nike swoosh at each side.

I like how my outfit came together. I wanted an effortless street style outfit and I think I achieved the look. I was a bit nervous because I was physically around my peers for the first time in a while. Whether I like to admit it or not, I felt that we were all judging each other based on our appearance. It was a way to get a sense of understanding of who we were and what our personalities were like and it was then I realized that not only was I dressing for myself but also for my classmates' approval.





## About the Author



Grace Nunekpeku is a student in her Junior year of college. She recently finished her associates degree in Fashion Marketing and is now working towards her bachelors degree in Business of Fashion. She hopes to then go to New York Film Academy to get her Masters in Fine Art. Grace was born in Ghana, West Africa and moved to New York at the age of 10 and is fluent in English, French, and Ewe (a Ghananian and Togolese native dialect). She loves to travel and so far has visited places like Bermuda, France, Germany, Senegal and Jamaica.