

Chapter Ten ~ That one night everyone talks about....

I hated prom, I never planned on going to prom until my friends planned an after party for me. I had grown into a friend group I was comfortable in it me, Zowie the up and coming model, Imani, and Narylan aka Nani. Imani was the shy type even more so than Zowie; she was a pretty 5'3 ft slim girl, with glasses and harlem street style. Narayan was my middle school friend and would do my make up. After my friend told me about throwing an after party I was more inclined to go, I hated my high school but after I would have something to look forward to. My prom was at Chelsea Pier and one week before prom I needed a dress. I told my mom Danis and my *tia* Blanca I changed my mind and we headed into a shop in Newark NJ. The small boutique sold formal dresses only after seeing long, short, bright, dark and all the dresses in between I found the one.

It was very non-traditional, as it was a pearly white mermaid dress that came in around the waist and flared out at the end. The dress was only long enough to cover my feet and when worn with heels would end just below the knee. The straps of the dress felt rough its the noodle sleeves were made of lace and elastic. The dress was embraced in silver metallic beads from the top of the dress to middle the silver beads created a seamless finish. The top of the dress was a sweetheart neckline. The dress had many layers, and more so at the ends of the dress the first layer that laid on top of my skin was satin, the layers in between the dress was polyester. The silver beading sat on top of this dress. For my purse I got a silver clutch that mimicked the silver lace on the dress. I wore a 7in open toe around point white heel. The shoe was faux leather white and with no design at all.

Before going to the salon I had dye my hair back to honey blonde. Modifying the color from a faded red to honey blonde only took a hour. The salon however *washed* my hair with shampoo removing any oils and dirty from the hair. They then conditions it to add *shine* and *texture*. After blow drying my hair and *intersecting* 2 tracks of human hair in the color 30 some *length* and *volume* was added to the hair. After a total of three hours I rush home where Nani was waiting for me. She added foundation to the skin removing the dark spots and acne bump this *transformed* my face to smooth flawless skin. She contoured around my nose and cheek to *enhance* my bone structure, and added a white seashell eyeshadow that was a light white that reflected purple and blue once the light touch it. She also did my eyebrows she didn't have my correct eye color so she shaded them in.

I liked my dress..... But not love. I felt awkward because I was already short and having the dress not cover my shoe completely made the dress feel cheap for me. While Nani did give

me a natural look like I wanted I couldn't help but think about my eyebrows and how itchy the make up was. I was not used to wearing make up I liked wearing my natural face and the whole night I couldn't help but think about my make up and dress. My hair was also shorter than expected I was over it and just wanted to get to the after party.



Chapter Eleven ~ Decision days

Over the summer I had been to at least a dozen open houses here in New York but also in Ohio. My sister Maria lived there and I really wanted to get in 4 schools. The modern school of design in Ohio, LIM private fashion school around 42 street and Manhattan, FIT on 34th street and lastly my safety school. Those were my top 4 I thought it didn't really matter what school I went to instead what I would do with the degree. As we are ending the high school year decision day was approaching it is when all the seniors of the school would come in full of pride and pick their college we would be attending in the summer time. The school would have flags up of the school and people can take picture with them. It was a school event as many seniors would wear their college shirt/sweat suit or the senior shirts given to us by the school in case we didn't know what school to go after. That morning I still didn't know what school to pick but I was excited to have been selected by each school I applied to. So I got ready and headed to school which was on Chelsea and 23rd street. There I would speak with my bridge coaches aka college advisor Sam, Fanta and Oiliva.

I wore a cotton and denim blend bell-bottom jeans with a knee cut, these jeans were light denim color and had been dye tinted of darker blue at the ends where the fabric would flare out. The ends of the jeans had layers they while the bottom layer of the jeans had distress finishes on the bottom, on top of that layer was a smaller layer with white denim finishes flared outward. The jeans were from Marshalls during their spring 2017 sale, I got these pants for total of \$25 dollars. I paired it with my senior t-shirt that was Travis Scott Astroworld inspired, the shirt was 100 % cotton and was part of the senior package. For my jacket I wore a green faux leather motorcycle jacket from Fashion Nova. The buttons and zippers were all gold; paired nicely with Adidas Stan Smith's sneaker which I wore like gladiator sandals. I took the laces of the shoe and crisscross them upward it created an X at the back of my shoe. I tie the lace on the inner side of my leg hiding the knot.

In the shower I used a Japanese cherry blossom sugar scrub to add *moisture* to my skin. After getting out instead of applying lotion to *hydrate* my skin in summer and I use an oil mist that created a *smooth texture*. As for my face I wash it with a fruit based cleanser that removed the excess oil around my nose and instead generates a glow. While getting dressed I wore a *pre-shaped* green mint bra. I sprayed my Japanese cherry blossom to smell fresh and girly and left.

Walking in with my senior shirt on didn't worry me as I knew I was going to make a decision soon. I saw people with their Buffalo State, FIT and, NYU shirts on and I wanted to hurry up and decide but I had to first speak with my bridge coaches. Sam was the one helping

me the most with my application. As I brought in my acceptance letter and went over the cost of admissions we found the most affordable and business of fashion school. CITY TECH !



Chapter Twelve ~ DATE NI- Day ?

I was so nervous I have never gone on a date before. I did not exactly know what to wear or how to act. It was August 11 2019 and Mark was picking me up. Mark was a 5'9ft dominican that love to go outside. I was 18 turning 19 and I had just got my fake ID; we would go everywhere together. Dyckman, located on 209 and Manhattan was a two to three block strip of clubs and hookah lounges. At this point Mark really expressed his feelings for me and asked me out on a date. Ask over text as we are still in the 21 century and started planning after I said yes. I didn't know it yet but Mark knew I love hookah, so he took me to Mamamjuna in Dyckman; It was a mid day date. I hated Mamamjuna as they were overly hyped but its a big restaurant which was named after a famous Dominican drink made with various aged alcohol. Mamajuna served dominican cruise and had a higher clientele then it's competitors due to its brand imaging.

As I tore my closet apart look for the perfect outfit I found something I never wore. It was an orange mid length dress that was draped loosely around center areas of my body. The dress was princess cut dress that *cuffed at the waist* with noddle strings that had raffles. The straps were button *adjustable* which is how I made the sweetheart neckline a halter one. I paired it with a tie up cream shoe which was a trend at the time and called gladiator sandals. The shoes were from Queen Mall and were on sale for \$10 dollars, It was a faux leather ginger cream show with gold finishing towards the end. The dress was from May Max boutique located in Fordham and Creston. It was \$56.50 and took 2 years to be worn. My hair was mid length honey blonde hair.

I made sure to look and feel fresh. I *brush* my teeth over and over that day to *keep my breath fresh*. I also *wash* my face with raw african black soap as it removes excess oil from my skin leaving a natural *glow* around my checks. I add pink cherry lip balm I got from Amazon to *moisturize* my lips and give it a plum look. I also applied sunblock to *protect* my skin from the harmful rays since it was summer. As for my hair I retouch my dark brown roots and added honey blonde. I wash and condition my hair to *hydrate* and *moisturize* the hair. I wore my hair straight that day and didn't add anything clips. I also didn't wear any make up. I added some *LANCÔME La vie est belle Eau De Parfum* and headed outside.

Mark was dressed semi formal with a button down and loosely fitted dress pants. I think we looked great. It was an unbelievable day. I was happy, the sun was shining and my hair stayed in place without curling up. The dress was long enough to sit like a lady and the waitress gave me some compliments on it.



Chapter thirteen - Leather booties

I always had a plan and so far I was on track being 16 one of the goals on the list was getting to a fashion based high school. Check. Next was getting a job at a fashion store I applied to each one of them in the city Forever21, H &M, Express and even local stores. My school hours were always a problem. I was in school from 8:49 am to 4pm most stores needed someone with a more open schedule. I kept on applying until I received a call back from Century 21 the worlds oldest and one of the largest department stores. The interview at the flagship of century 21 it was located in lower Manhattan on 22 Cortlandt Street. I called my sister Maria so she can guide me through what to say or what to wear to the interview. I would practice over the phone over and over again. When it came up to what to wear; my sister told me to please burn the sneakers I already was thinking about wearing. She said wear something Chic, simple and covered up. I tried on a few outfits.

Not knowing what to wear and what professional actually means I took my best shot. I wore a long sleeve turtleneck shirt, this shirt had no design and was full length shirt. I got that shirt from Palisades Center aka ppp mall, it was from a small store for just \$10 dollars. The pants were black fitted formal pants that were cuffed at the top of the pants to create a cleaner look. The pants were an Italian brand as I couldn;t read a word on the label; I got these from a thrift and go on Jerome for 5 dollars. The pants were made of mix blend of polyester, rayon, spandex. The shirt was cotton blend of polyester. I wore the shirt inside the pants as I see people getting ready for interview do. For the shoes I had some ankle booties in black that were faux leather, it had a zipper on the inner right side of the show and costed 15 dollars in Rainbow. Lastly I wore an orange trench coat that had brown buttons the jacket was orange suede and orange silk in the inside. The jacket was from easy pickins located on Walton and Fordham. To hold my resume and id I borrowed my mothers Calvin Klevin brown and black bag. It was a medium tote bag with one gold button to close the bag. The straps were gold chains at the bottom and then when into a black and brown leather ck ck ck ck design.

My hair was my one of my many concerns for the interview. My hair never likes to stay the same for too long so I needed a hairstyle that can be held in place but also look cute. My hair had been already *dye* blonde so I *modified* it again by touching up the roots of my hair and *inserting* my synthetic hair *clips* in the color 30 to the lower part of my head. By doing this I created more *volume* as the top of my hair and left some strings of hair out in spanish we call this “*sacar novio*” due to the fact that it flatters your face and makes you look innocent. I created a loosely braided side braid *applied* some bobby brown lip stick in a nude brown and ran out the door.

I got to the interview and it was a group interview I had 10 people I was interviewing with. Ones older and some with more than one job. As I looked around the room I seemed overdressed I saw sneakers, hats, hoodies and everything I wear on day to day. Before leaving my house I had an air of confidence but as I sat down I felt deflated. I didn't get the job.



Chapter Fourteen ~ Goodbye Fashion

The high school of fashion industries was fashion based school where instead of going to regular school and skipping classes we had to stay in class and run a fashion business. It was competitive, annoying and when it was over I was happy. I left accomplished and also evolved. I had finished high school and was on the right track. My graduation was in the United Palace in Little Dominican Republic aka Washington Heights and my family had come together to see me. It was my mom Danis, my *tia* Blanca, my pregnant and highly argumentative sister Maria, her boyfriend and my newly arrived cousin Cristal. My family didn't live in New York but they always made time for me. The presence of my family and my accomplishment left me with a feeling of something new. As I released my old self and embraced the college freshmen before me, it was only right to leave in black; I wanted to keep things simple and leave that part of life behind me.

For my graduation dress I wore a plain black dress with a squared top cut. It was a mini dress that ended above the knees. The pre-shaped sleeves were quarter length in the arms. The sleeves were oversized and flared out the cuffs on the bottom of the sleeves stitched in the arms. The dress was made of polyester and jersey materials. It had no eye drawing designs which is why I paired it with a 10 inch gold shoe. The heel was a closed top shoe that slipped on. My graduation gown was royal blue and draped loosely the gown ended 1 ft below the knee it was made of 100% polyester and looked very shiny. As for my sash I had the honor of wearing two. Everyone had gotten a yellow sash that said the year and school initials but I was in student government which had black and white sash having looked at my outfit I left the yellow sash at home. My sash wasn't decorated but it was also blue and the tassels were a bright orange/ yellow.

Turning the music all the way up as I get ready, I *inserted* bra straps on. I wore all black underwear to match the dress since shorts would have been noticeable. I add lotions to my legs to create a *smooth* look. Around my chest I add body glitter by good girl it's gold and it *blends* into my skin perfectly. For my nails I had extra long coffin nail except for the index finger which would be filled round to be a silhouette. For my index finger I had clear pink gel with a silver glitter ombre; the rest of my fingers were painted seashell white which reflected pink, blue and purple. There was ABS rhinestone placed on the top center of the nail. Helping me get ready was my friend, *inserting* my gold anklet with emerald green detailing my friend help me grip it's clutch and it sat on my left leg.

Doing the graduation I felt heard for once I had graduated and I didn't feel this heaviness anymore. The black dress gave me confidence as it created a slimmer figure and with my blonde

hair the dress was able to stand out more. My family was proud to see me walk across the stage in those tall heels as they cheered me on I felt my steps get better.



Chapter 15 ~ New York Summer...

Parks, grills and laughter created the perfect casual summer. I was on my way to claymount park in the bronx, for a cookout in July 2020. It was the first time in a year I had seen my far family. My sister Maria was coming down from Ohio and this time with Oilver my nephew. He was just born and was being brought down so the rest of the family can see him. My mother Danis was preparing everything so we could go. She seasoned the meat, cooked the rice and bought the drinks. Just like a true New Yorker, one freezer was for adults and one for kids. My Tia Blanca was on her way from Newark NJ. When we arrived at the park at 3pm almost all the park grills were taken, the music was loud and people were everywhere; beach chairs on beach chairs, we started unpacking.

I wore a cotton, chiffon and elastic blend blue fabric bell bottom jumpsuit with a v line neckline and three brown buttons. There were pleats on the center of the jumpsuit that created a slimming look. The chest area dropped down to a deep v line due to the cups overlaying on top of each other. The back of the jumpsuit was held together by a light blue matching zipper. The back of the dress contained elastic as it would stretch out 4 inches bigger than the original size of the garment. In regards to the straps, they were adjustable plain noddle straps. For my shoes I wore white adidas crisscrossed the back of the shoe again as it become my new fashion staple. To keep my phone and anything else I need I paired this outfit with a steve madden mini backpack with various colors such as navy blue, green, gold and turquoise which were part of different flower patterns.

For my hair I applied gel to the top of the hair brushing it from front to back 7 to 10 times. My hair was *transferred* into a slick neat low bun with a middle part. I *tease* the end of the hair to create *volume* and have my bun look bigger. My mother used an at home wax kit to wax my eyebrows so they look *symmetrical* and *plucked* the top of my eyebrow to *modify* the thickness. After that I *brush* my teeth with colograte to create *fresh* clean breath. I applied a blue tint lip balm that gave my lips a light purple color, this *smoothed the texture* of my lips and complemented the outfit. I *inserted* my small gold hoops earrings and non-pricing gold nose ring for my accessories.

In the park I was able to play with Oilver and my other family members. I had been walking around and nothing was popping out or bothering me in any way. While the jumpsuit was light denim color it was easy to remove dirt off of. The light denim color did not get dirty and I felt my snug yet comfortable along the waist due to pleating. I felt like a denim princess.