

# *Becoming Me*





*Written and Illustrated By Lizeth  
Pilamunga*

# *Prologue*

I wrote this book to show how life changes and show that a simple outfit can give you the important days of your life. Clothes are often the window to many aspects of our lives. It is something that characterizes us and does make us ourselves. Clothes reveal our personality. With the different styles, I can give a point of view of myself towards the world. My different outfits will help them continue with me to the place where each memory passes as a process of constructing my world. Being unique and wearing what you like can help you to get more confidence. Sometimes a cloth could be a symbol of a lot of bad or good memories.

Writing this book allowed me to understand how many important things I have achieved in my life and how each day was so special, with the people I loved the most. I gained a better understanding of my style and how I like to dress from my book. As a reader, I hope my book will have the same impact on you.

# *Forward*

My name is Rosa Sislema, and I have known Lizeth since she was a child. It has been a pleasure watching her grow over the years. Since we were able to attend events together. She was always a stylist. Her mother always sent her the most unique and stylish outfits. No one has ever owned it. I helped her combine outfits and match accessories as we spent time together. For different events that we attended, I helped her put together outfits. She always made a lot of effort into making each of her outfits look stylish and impeccable at each event. Watching her put-together outfits was one of my favorite things to watch, and I can't wait to see how she changes her style when we are no longer together. Every time, she improves her style.

Lizeth wants to accomplish many things in her life. Fashion is her dream career, and she aspires to be a stylist. In order to help other people look gorgeous, she wants to create the prettiest outfits and make-up. Taking pictures and dressing up helps her positively influence others by showing off her style.

*-Rosa Sislema*

*November 2022*

# *Acknowledge*

It is my pleasure to acknowledge my aunt Rosa. My aunt has been the fuel to my engine over the years that has kept me motivated and striving for better. My aunt was my first fashion inspiration from her stylish clothes to her brassy hairstyles and lovely makeup. She inspired me to study fashion when I was older. My sincere gratitude extends to you, Rosita. My love for you will never end, and I hope you are proud of the woman I have become even when we are no longer together.

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# Chapter 1

## Start!

My first day of school was in 2004 when I was living in Ecuador. I attended a school called Humberto Martinez. To get to school, I had to take the school bus. At 5:00 in the morning, I had to wake up to catch the school bus. To prepare for school, I needed to put on my uniform, eat breakfast, wash my face, brush my teeth, comb my hair and prepare my things because the bus would pick me up at 6:00 a.m. In order for me to familiarize myself with the school, my grandmother Isaura accompanied me on my first day. When I arrived at school, the teacher was very friendly.

Students in Ecuador are required to wear uniforms to school. In school, I wore two uniforms. The first one was for each day of the week. The outfit was a *wrapped* blue knitted jacket with a white shirt, a red tie, and a wide skirt with a gray and white striped pattern *adhered*. The *length* of the skirt has to be modified and has to fall just below my knees. Each layer in the skirt area was *layered* giving an accordion style. I wore white socks and black closed shoes. The second uniform was for Physical Education days, which were 2 days a week. The outfit was *fitted* with a blue knitted jacket, a white shirt, a red tie, and a wide skirt with a gray and white *striped* pattern. of a light gray sports jacket, pants, and shorts with red lines and a white T-shirt with the school's logo.

Although the daily uniform was more formal and uncomfortable due to the shirt and tie, it was *rough and tight*. The skirt was below the knee and everything had to be *pressed*. I needed to use my name, it should be *clipped* to my chest to make it easier for the teacher to learn our names. There were strict requirements for *ironing* all the uniforms, *tying* the ties correctly, and *polishing* the shoes. If not, they caught my attention. My hair had to be *well brushed and pinned* in a ponytail or braids. My grandmother Isaura made a lot of braids, which were uncomfortable for me since she would often press them too much and put pressure on my head. However, I always tied my hair up so it wouldn't catch my attention. These modifications to the uniform were taken very seriously by the school.

As I look back on my school uniform, I am reminded of all the memories that I have from my childhood. I realize how much I have changed since then. My memories of those times make me happy because it takes me back to that time in my life. I am reminded of why I was like that as a child. It was everything I learned during the first year that made me a better girl. I was timid and quiet at the beginning of the year, but my teachers helped me develop over the years. I would like to thank all of the teachers at school who helped me to leave my trauma behind and be able to move forward. As I said before, this stage of my life is very significant for me because it was my first uniform. In addition, I grew up and learned many useful things that I will use throughout my life.







# Chapter 2

## Communion

Making my first communion was one of the happiest days of my life since I was receiving God into my life. When I understood what the word of God was, it was a moment of peace for me. Every Saturday, I had to be there from 7:00 am to 12:00 pm. This was for two years. I had a friend from my school, so I didn't feel so lonely and bored when we went out to eat. It was a lot of fun, we got to know many churches and learned a lot about the Bible. Our catechist was very kind and taught us many things that helped us make our first communion.

The dress I wore in the first communion, was *a* white formal dress *wrapped* at the torso around the waist. Lace gloves and a veil *adhered to my outfit*. My aunt Rosa helps me to choose the best dress for the occasion. I *pre-shape* the white little heels and white tights with lace trim to complete my outfit. The dress was simple, and the dimension of the fabric on the skirt spoke of its elegance. Each layer under the dress was *layered* creating a poofy pattern with great volume at the bottom.

For my first communion, modifications and accessories were required. My aunt Rosa helped me by *straightening* my hair at home. I *brushed* and *styled* my hair into a simple hairstyle with the top I made a little bow, and the rest loose. I *attached* lace gloves that covered my hands. I pre-shaped a chain to my neck with my name on it that my mom had given me. To adjust my veil I *clipped* into my hair a headband with beautiful oval-shaped crystals. I *applied* lip gloss and perfume. The lipstick gave my lips more shine and the perfume gave me a pleasant aroma.

My first communion is one of the most pleasant memories I have. As I look back, I remember all of the friends I made. The adventures we shared and all the knowledge about God that I learned. Since the church was far from my house, I really enjoyed visiting there. It was a lot of fun for me to be able to remember my family with me again on the day of my first communion. For the occasion, my entire family joined me at a very elegant restaurant.



# Chapter 3

## Academy

When I was 12 years old, I entered the "Quito" academy in Ecuador for the eighth grade for the first time. There were only girls at the school. I had to take the school bus to go to school. The starting time was 1:00 PM until 6:00 PM. I was on that schedule for 3 years until the 10th. When I was in my first year of high school, I always tied my hair up in a ponytail. I entered high school in the morning from 7:00 am to 12:00 pm when I was in the 11th grade. During the 11th grade, I did not take the school bus since I could go to school alone. I met my best friends on the first day, which was very exciting.

For high school, I had 3 uniforms: a black blazer *covered with a very thin sky-blue lining inside*, a white *forward point* shirt, a white skirt with a pattern of blue and red lines, nylon stockings, and black high heel shoes. A second uniform the outfits were combined with a blue knitted jacket, a white shirt, a red tie, and a wide skirt with a gray and white striped pattern, the *pre-shaped* body coverings used was white socks and black shoes. The third uniform was for physical education, which lasted for two days. The outfit was *fitted with a* blue sports jacket, pants, and a white t-shirt worn with white tennis shoes. School uniforms had to be maintained well. Skirts could not be too short, they had to be below the knee, and the pants could not be too tight or they would tear and we would have to use another.

I need some modifications and accessories for my uniforms at the academy. I always *pinned, brushed*, and left my hair down, to make it look cute. I *clipped* it to my hair bows or headbands. I liked *straightening* my hair occasionally. I *applied* mascara to my eyelashes to help them appear longer. To make my hands feel softer, I liked to apply the cream.

All my friends come to mind when I think of the Academy. Those crazy things I did in my teens bring back good memories. I had some of the best experiences of my life during those years that will never return. During that time, I matured the most because I had to make one of the best decisions of my life: coming to the United States and starting over. Although I couldn't graduate in Ecuador, I did in the United States. At this stage of my life, I met my true friends, fell in love, and made decisions that changed my life, allowing me to achieve my goals.



# Chapter 4

## Quinceañera

My XV birthday. I had one of the most enjoyable days of my life. Even though I couldn't be with my mom that day, I was very grateful for all she had done for me. We rented a large salon where I was able to invite all my friends from school. It felt like I was a real princess. Everyone who was with me on that special day made me feel very loved. I'm dancing like never before. I had the dress of my dreams. Everything seemed unreal that day, but I enjoyed every bite.

The dress I wore in my XV years was a formal pink dress *wrapped* around my shoulders and covered in silk. After looking online and trying on the dress in the store, my aunt Rosa helped me find the appropriate dress. It had thin straps with multiple layers of pink silk *adhered* to the waist. The dress was pompous and very striking, and the detailing spoke of its elegance. Each layer in the middle area of the skirt was *layered*, creating a drape throughout the dress in a drop waist design.

For my XV years, I needed some formal jewelry, and modifications were necessary. My hair was *brushed* and I *gathered* it all in a bun. My nails are painted nude, and I have on long silk gloves. They covered my arm up to my elbow, which gave me a very elegant touch with my dress. I wear a crown, *clipped* to my hair. That day, I *pre-shaped* a chain, bracelet, and ring that my mother Maria gave me. The jewels sparkled, giving me a touch of glitz. In order to make my face look brighter, I used makeup that made it shine.

The memorable party I held during my XV years always comes to mind when I think of XV years. I had a wonderful day because all the people I love were with me. It was a wonderful experience for me to be able to share my happiness with them. I would like to thank everyone who was with me. During that day, I also cried on the phone when my mom apologized for not being with me. On that special day, I realized my mom put a lot of effort into giving me the best and making me feel very happy. It is because of her that my dream has come true. I will always be grateful to her.





# Chapter 5

## Get together

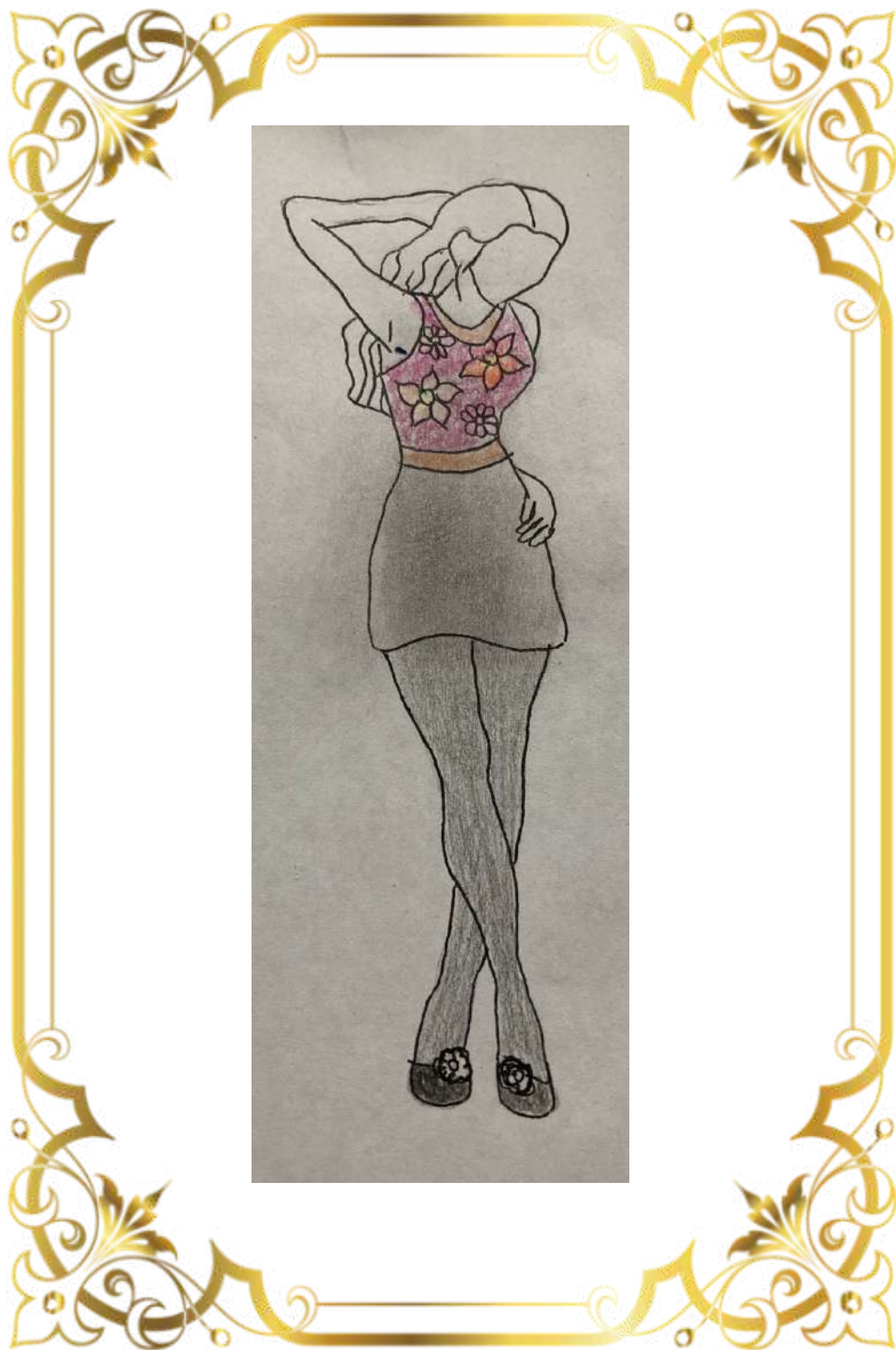
A feeling that cannot be compared with anything I have ever experienced is the feeling of meeting my mother again after 13 years. It was the 5th of August, 2015. At 1:00 AM, my flight left Quito, Ecuador. There was an 8-hour flight. There seemed to be no end to the flight. I was so anxious that I didn't even get up to use the bathroom for fear of missing the flight. As a result of the emotion, I was unable to sleep, and I wasn't sure what was happening. Saying goodbye to my family was one of the hardest days of my life. Seeing my grandmother, who raised me for over 16 years, cry uncontrollably was very sad. Leaving her hurt me, even though I tried being strong. My only satisfaction was the thought that one day I would be able to give her a better life.

The dress I wore to the meeting with my mom Maria was a flower print *wrap* dress and a *suspender* around my neck. My back was exposed, while the rest was black and smooth, and the dress was a halter dress and was *fitted* against the body. My body *slimmed* down by dressing in black stockings and black high heels. One of my aunts Judy bought me the dress as a going-away gift. Each layer of the upper part was *wrapped* as if they were continuous *layers* creating a kind of accordion along the bust and waist.

For that special day, I made some modifications. I waved my hair at home, so I could meet my mom and she would see me pretty. I *brushed* my hair into a side-grained hairstyle, *inserted* some clips on the right side and all my hair fell on the left side. The texture of my hair was smooth when combed and had a unique shine. I filed my nails to make them look neat and stylish. I wore a honey-colored watch made of leather. To fix my hair when I arrive, I *inserted* a few hairpins on my right side so that all my hair falls to the left. To give my lips more color, I *painted* them a bit. I added some cream and perfume to have a good scent. Although I felt very tired, I tried to improve my posture to give a positive impression.

Whenever I think of that day, I am reminded that everything in life is possible. It has always been a dream of mine to see my mom again and be able to spend time together again. It was she who fulfilled my dream of coming to the United States to live a better life. There is still that dress in my closet that brought me to the country of opportunities, where I have done many things. Since I arrived here, my life has completely changed. My dreams will continue to be fulfilled and I appreciate everything that has happened to me.





# Chapter 6

## Start Over

It was difficult to start from scratch, but it wasn't impossible either. The process of starting a new life included attending a new school. Since I didn't feel like I belonged at that school, I found it difficult at first to meet new people. It seemed that no one wanted to be my friend. During the break, I stayed in the bathroom for the entire time. Being very quiet was always a problem for me; I didn't have the confidence to talk to anyone. Getting up at 6:30 AM, I had breakfast, brushed my teeth, and made sure my face was clean so that I could put on makeup. Using a large comb, I untangled my hair. Whenever I *combed* my hair, I made small tails and let the rest fall loose.

My first day of classes is still fresh in my mind. Under a brown sweatshirt *combined*, with a beige blouse. I wore light blue jeans with two pockets in front. Jeans were very flexible and close to the body. I *incorporated* brown boots into my outfit. I used a gray bag with some clips *attached*. It was strange to be in a school in the U.S., but I was very excited to see how it was. I *clipped* earrings that match my outfit. I use a *pre-shape* belt with a buckle made of cristal on borders.

On the first day of school. I made a haircut that helped my face look *slimmer*. I *brushed* my hair and made some waves to give it volume. To make my face stand out, I applied light makeup and lipstick. I felt confident and pretty when I made changes to my hair and face frequently. I always kept my hair *well-combed* and loose. To make it *shine*, I used oil. As a result of the makeup, my face stood out, and my eyes appeared more prominent when dressed up. My outfit would not be complete without accessories. It was imperative for me to wear chains and watches that matched my outfit.

I have so many memories of my first day at school in the United States. I am still convinced that anything is possible because of everything I have learned and achieved. It was one of my most memorable times when I met love and true friendships. I had a lot of fun and had one of the most difficult stages to forget. During this time, I also reflected on my life and what I wanted to achieve. Throughout my life, everything I've experienced has helped me become a better person.



# Chapter 7

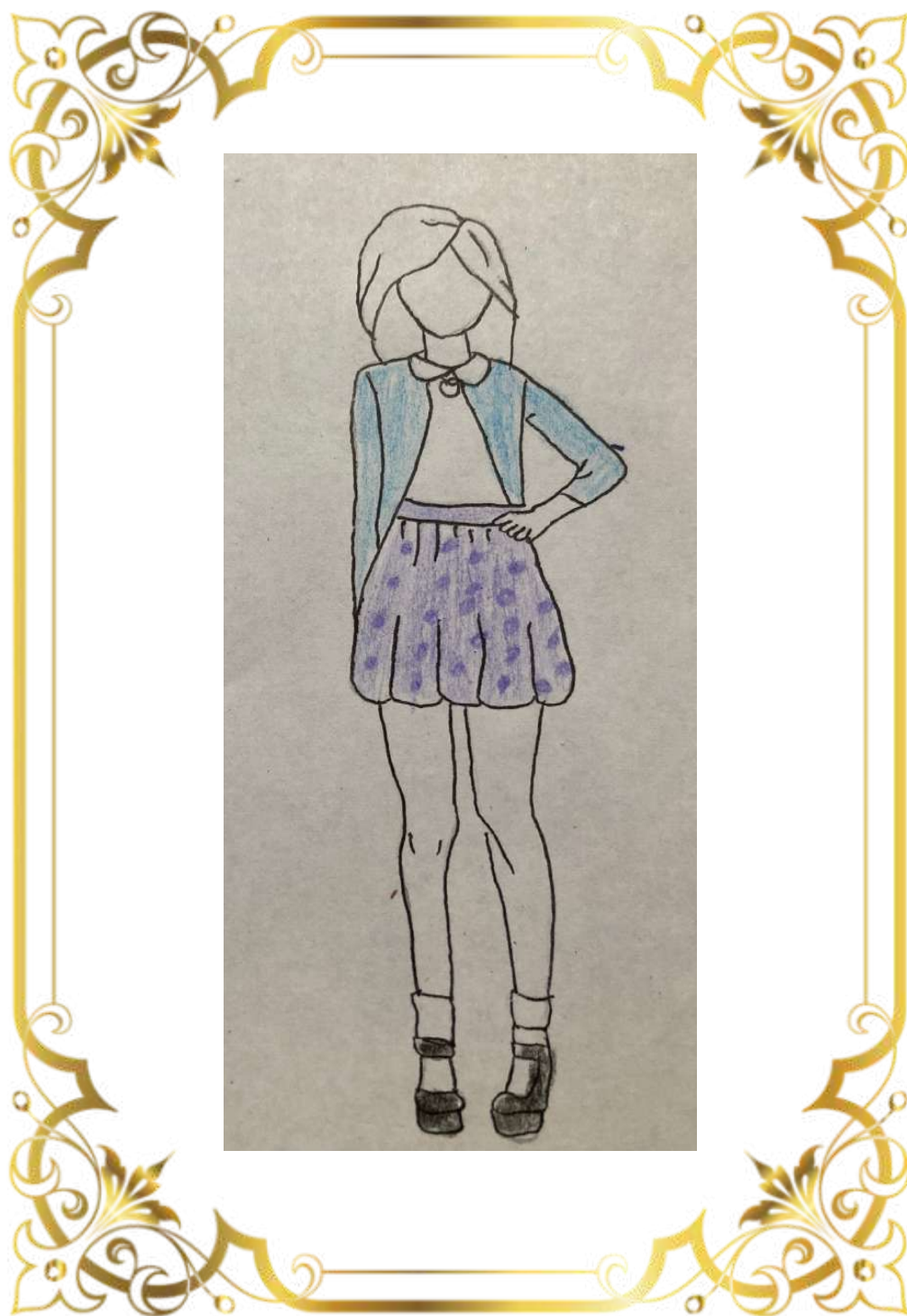
## Mom's Birthday

A day like no other, my mom enjoyed her 39th birthday like never before. In my family, it is customary to please someone all day long on their birthday. To surprise my mom, I organized a small party with my aunts and uncles. On that day, I woke her up early, sang her birthday song, and made her blow out her candle. For her, I prepared breakfast. The timing was just right because my mom had to do some paperwork and wouldn't be home until the afternoon.

On my mom's birthday, I used a white *pre-shape* blouse, a sky blue blazer, and a lilac short skirt with a dotted pattern *suspended* at the waist. Along with this, I wore some black high heels with stockings. My dad and I are looking for the perfect outfit for me and my mom for her birthday. The blazer was formal with the combination of the shirt made me look elegant and formal. The skirt was *layered*, creating lines along the skirt. I created more curves in my hips with the loose skirt, and my waist appear slimmer with the *suspenders*.

On my mom's birthday, I made some modifications to my face. My face looked smaller that day because I *straightened* my hair. There was a shine to my hair and it felt silky and smooth. My eyes and lips seemed more *prominent* due to the makeup. In addition, I made changes to my hands. A few designs and stones were added to my manicure, which made my nails look modern and stylish. I *inserted* a crystal brooch that my dad gave me, *clipped* on my shirt, made of beautiful crystals in the shape of a butterfly ring. My legs looked longer, slimmer, and slimmer thanks to the heels.

The first birthday my mother celebrated with me fills me with nostalgia, since it took us many years to celebrate together. Although we have been through a lot, I was able to spend time with her, hug her and tell her how much I love her. The memories of when we were separated always remind me that she is the most significant person in my life. I would not be where I am without her. She is my role model, my counselor, my friend, and everything to me. Despite everything she has done for me, I will always be grateful to her for giving me the finest.





# Chapter 8

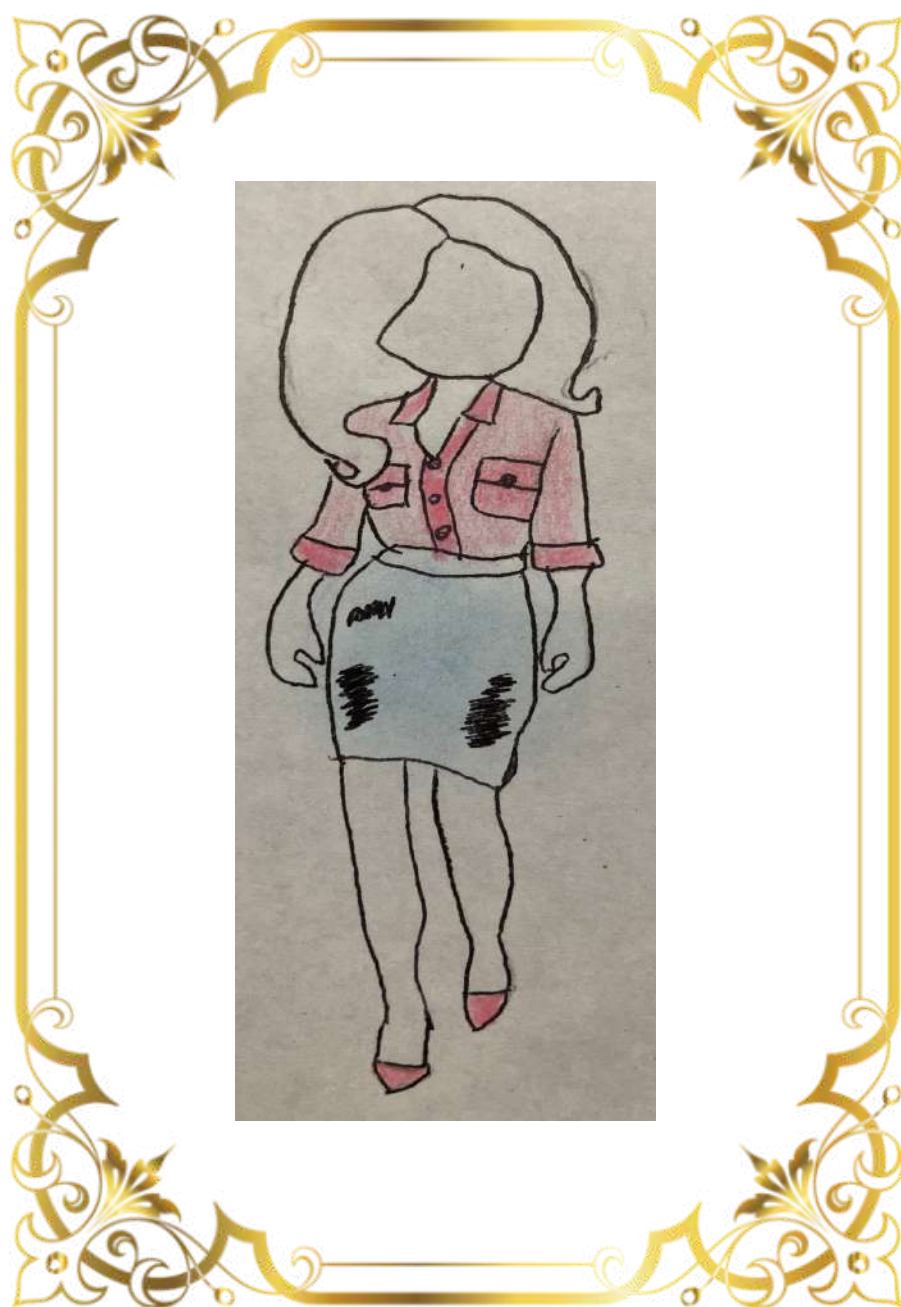
## Real birthday

It was the first birthday I spent with my mom Maria. This was the first time I spent my birthday with my mother, so it was an emotional day for me. My mom organized everything, and it was a surprise for me. She cooked what I liked and I invited my family so they could spend time with us. It was 20 December 2015. I turned 17 years old this year. My mom woke me up on a Saturday morning. After making me a delicious breakfast, she told my dad to take me shopping. My mom organized a party, and when we returned, they surprised me with lots of nice things.

My 17th birthday was the day they made me more aware. Everything I wanted was bought for me by my dad. The perfect outfit for the party would be a denim button-down blouse *combined* with a ripped denim skirt. I *pre-shape* honey-colored heels. The skirt I wore that day was *close* to the body and almost to the knees. I looked good and my waist looked smaller. My blouse's sleeves were *wrapped* so that they added elegance to my arms.

To make my eyes stand out, I *applied* some makeup and false eyelashes. To make my hair stand out more, I *straightened* it and added some small jewels as ornaments. I *dried* my hair to make it look more voluminous and bulky. As a result of the heels, I appeared taller and slimmer. To make my fingernails and toenails look prettier, my dad took me to the salon. The *attached* necklace I wore had been given to me by my mom Maria a few years ago. I looked more radiant and improved my appearance with makeup. As a result of the changes I made that day, I was able to feel more confident and look better.

When I look back on my 17th birthday, I remember everything my mom did to make me happy that day. She reminds me of all the good wishes I received that day from my family. The day I spent with my mom was one of the most enjoyable days of my life. Since then, my family always celebrates my birthday and I enjoy doing it with them because I know they love me and always support me. The most important thing to me is my family. For being with me at those crucial moments of my life, I will always be grateful.





# Chapter 9

## Goal!

My graduation was in June 2018, it was a very special day, it was one of my first achievements. The graduation was in the auditorium of the Guardia Community College. I was very happy that my parents are with me on that special day. The auditorium was decorated with blue and red curtains, balloons, and a large sign that said "Congratulations to all graduates." After the ceremony, my mother organized a small party for me that I celebrated with my family.

The weather was phenomenal on the day of my graduation. For that day I used a white dress with black stripes and the skirt was black. My outfit was *implemented* with heels with a kind of black mesh. The dress was totally *attached* to my body. I wore a long blue gown that covered most of my outfit. My dad Jose was the one who helped me put the gown and the graduation cap on my head. Each layer of the gown was *layered* creating a flat pattern with any volume.

Days before graduation I got a V-shaped haircut. This made my hair sort of layered, shorter, and longer throughout the length of the hair. I *combed* my hair and ironed it so that the ends were straight. This made my hair look more stylized and smooth. To highlight my face, I *applied* shadows that made my eyes more depth with the help of eyeliner that I did. I always kept my hair to the sides of my shoulders. I used the graduation cap and *inserted* it into my hair with some small headbands to hold it so it wouldn't fall off. I used some accessories that my mom gave me. I *inserted* a pair of long earrings into my ears. I *attached* a bracelet and ring in the same style as the earrings.

This was an achievement for both me and my family. When I remember it, it makes me nostalgic because I learned many things in high school, where I started a new life. It was one of the places that I liked the most since I arrived in the United States where I met many great people and friends. It was where I learned to function alone in this country. I would like to go back in time and enjoy those years when I had a lot of fun.



# Chapter 10

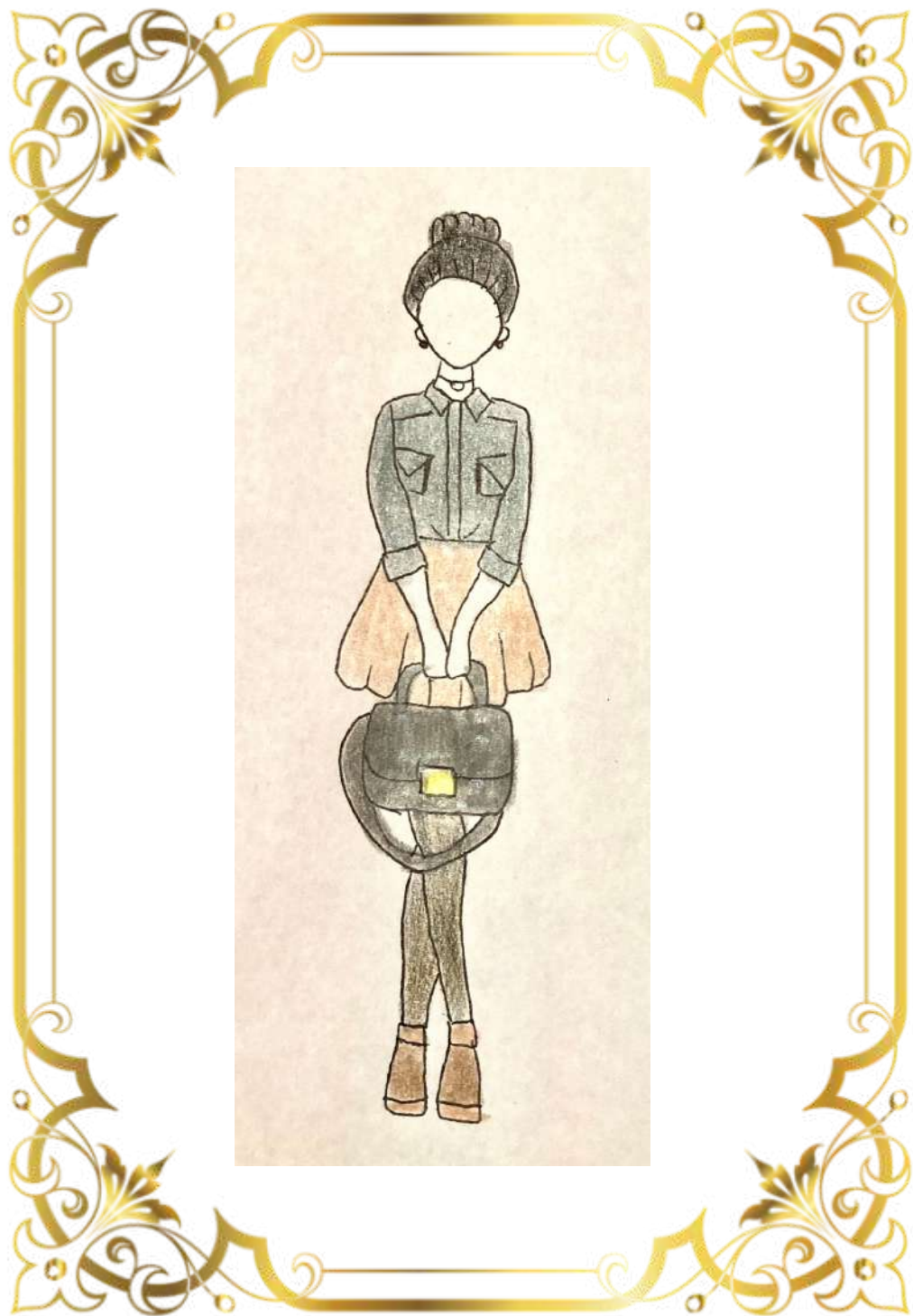
## New Dream

An important day was when I entered college since in my family I am the second to enter college. I felt blessed to my parents for giving me the opportunity to study. I was very excited to fulfill my dreams and achieve what I always wanted. When I entered the University I did not know exactly what I wanted to study, but over time I knew that my passion was fashion. It is something that has always caught my attention, something that I really enjoy. The university is very welcoming and full of excellent professors, it was one of the things that I liked the most.

The first day at the College was a sunny day but a bit windy. What I wore the first day was a denim shirt with a sky blue collar and a brown skirt that was *layered* in accordion style. My blouse was *wrapped* around my elbows. I *used* black leggings to cover my legs. I *pre-shaped* a brown boot for my outfit which made me look more stylized.

On my first day at College, I modified my style. I *combed* my hair and made myself a high jumpsuit where I *gathered* all my hair. I *painted* my nails a very subtle nude color to make them look elegant. I used perfume to have a good scent. I *inserted* earrings into my ears. I *pre-shape* a layered collar to my neck. I wore a little makeup something a little natural I did not want to exaggerate. I *painted* my lips to give a bit of shine and color to my face.

It's been 3 years since then and I still remember it like it was yesterday. Time has passed so fast that I don't think I'm about to graduate and fulfill more dreams. I am proud of all that I have achieved. For me it is a very important step in my life and my career, I know that I will get the job of my dreams. My mom will feel very proud after she manages to graduate since she has always been the one who has supported me all these years.



# Chapter 11

## Lucky day

One of the most exciting days of my life was when I got my driver's license because my father supported me. He paid me for school so that I could learn. He always supported me. He always advised me that I should learn new things, and always move forward. It was a strange day since many things happened to me but in the end, I managed to pass the exam. I was very nervous since the first time I lost it and I was giving it a second time. Everything went well and I managed to get my license.

That day I wore a white woven t-shirt that had small chains *attached* to the front of the shoulders. It had a red heart-shaped logo with white lettering. Wear black Capri jeans with front pockets. The jean was really comfortable, it had some cuts in the knee section. *Pre-shaped* some white sneakers with pink lines to my outfit. I *attached* a small white bag to my outfit, where I kept all my documents.

On the day of my driving test, I *combed* my hair and tied it on one side of my head, leaving it completely loose. The accessories that I incorporated into my outfit were: I *attached* a colored headband that helped me keep my hair from the side of the head. I *pre-shaped* a watch to my wrist. I *inserted* a pink earring in my lumped earlobe. I used mascara to make my lashes look longer. I used lip gloss to give my lips a bit of shine. I used cream to make my hands soft and smell nice.

That day several things happened that were out of my plans. But I took it easy, I did things calmly and everything turned out as expected. It is important to have everything ready, not to leave everything for last. Because many times we don't know what we may need and for this reason having it in advance helps everything to flow faster and better. Always being prepared helps you not to worry too much and focus on what is truly important.





# Chapter 12

## Glory day!

Another of my achievements was when I became a citizen. It was one of the best achievements I have had since I was able to be part of this country. To have more opportunities and continue fulfilling all the goals I have planned to do in this beautiful country. That day was so special that I cried with my mother Maria because she made all of this possible. She has always been my engine, the one who has always helped me to get ahead. She did everything possible for me to obtain residency and have no problems living in the United States. He has always wanted me to stand out above all else and have many opportunities.

For the day of the ceremony, my mother Maria helped me find the dress for this special occasion. I wear a dark orange dress. Each layer under the dress was *layered* creating a poofy pattern. It had an *inset* pattern of black flowers. The dress had *suspender* straps that went around my shoulders from front to back. A *pre-shape* belt at the waist made my waist look narrower. Despite its simplicity, the dress was elegant because of the fabric's dimension. I implemented it with black nylon socks and black-heeled boots.

For the day of the ceremony, some accessories and modifications were required. I *brush* my hair and then wave my hair at home. I *used* makeup so that my face would stand out and I could look good in the photos. I *attached* a mask to my face since it was health protocol to wear it. I used glitter perfume on my chest which helped me to shine. High-heeled boots made my legs look longer and straighter.

It was a very emotional day because I was able to fulfill another dream in my life. I never thought that I would become part of this country. I made it and I know that now I can enjoy this country beyond what I had already enjoyed. I know I can achieve great things. Now I'm better than before and I have to take advantage of every opportunity that comes my way to be better every day and keep growing.





# Chapter 13

## Back-home

One of my most exciting and emotional days was the day I returned to Ecuador. After 7 years of not seeing my grandmother Isaura. It was one of the best days since she felt pleased and proud to see everything I had achieved and everything that I have changed in me. I could see my family and some of my friends again. There were 13 hours of travel where we stopped in Miami. We arrive at 11:30 PM in Ecuador. Where all my family was waiting for me very happily.

The blouse I wore to return to Ecuador was a white blouse with black dots that had two *layers* down apart and was *wrapped*. It had a pompous shape because of the two layers at the bottom. I *attached* a small pink vest. I wore some black leggings that had cuts at the ankles. I *implemented* very comfortable pink tennis shoes that helped me throughout the trip.

For that day, I made some modifications. I *brushed* and *styled* my hair into a high ponytail so my hair wouldn't get in the way when I was picking up my bags. I put on makeup, to have a bit of luminosity on my face. I used mascara to lengthen my eyelashes. I used fake nails to make my hands look more elegant and stylized. I *inserted* some hairpins in the sides of my hair so that it wasn't in my face. I *pre-shaped* a white apple watch that matched my blouse. I used perfume so when my family hugged me they smelled a good scent. I used lipstick which gave my lips a bit of color.

It was a very emotional day, seeing my grandmother and my aunts again was very exciting for me since many years had passed. They were the best two months of my life. Being with them, going back to my old home, and seeing everything differently. It brought back so many memories that I had forgotten. They were the best vacations since I enjoyed getting to know new places and eating everything.



## *About the Author,*



Lizeth Pilamunga is a 23-year-old senior student at New York City College of Technology. She majors in Business and Technology of Fashion at City Tech. She plans to become a stylist after graduating from City Tech. Although she always knew she wanted to be a stylist in the fashion industry, she wasn't sure how to get there. She wrote this book to show other people the

importance of each outfit and that each occasion is as important as the clothes we wear, it is like our personal brand what we let them know about us and how we feel.

*Lizeth Pilamunga*

*November 2022*