



# Versatile Style

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*A Journal of Dress*

*Written & Illustrated by*

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## Table Of Contents...

Prologue.....	
Foreword.....	
Acknowledgements.....	
Chapter 1: American Dream.....	
Chapter 2: Happily Ever After.....	
Chapter 3: Mom n' Dad.....	
Chapter 4: Recital Attire.....	
Chapter 5: Remember Your Feminine Felion .....	
Chapter 6: Red Hot House Warming .....	
Chapter 7: Monkey Say, Disney Do. ....	
Chapter 8: Slim & Fit. Reliable Bit. ....	
Chapter 9: Falsified Friendship. ....	
Chapter 10: Graduated Growth. ....	
Chapter 11: Quiet Time. ....	
Chapter 12: E n' S .....	
About The Author.....	

# Prologue..

Life is constantly changing, and so am I. As life changes like the waves of the ocean, I adapt to its ebb and flow.

Dress is a choice we can all make to empower ourselves through these changes. Dress is a powerful tool that we all have available to us and should be utilized daily. It's your secret superpower, and your key to confidence through changing times.

Different situations can bring out different emotions, expressions and versions of ourselves. In this book, you will find documented, the different expressions of myself as I adapt to different occupancies throughout my life.

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They say not to judge a book by its cover, but I strongly disagree. I believe the cover, is an expression of the book itself, just like our dress is an expression of ourselves.

This expression is not one to be taken lightly; as our very essence of being is represented in the world by the way we dress. Our first impression shows up here, so make a good one.

Show up as your most confident self always, mentally, and in how you dress. Genuinely feel it and be prepared to face the various things life has to throw at you with a great outfit, and iron will.

This is a confidence that no one can take away. This is your superpower, your versatile style.

# Foreword...

The reader may or may not know Shana Cromwell-Ramnarain, but if you are lucky enough to have met her, then you know she is as cheerful as the way she dresses.

Being able to have the privilege of knowing Shana for nearly a decade, I can say that she tremendously pays close attention to the smallest detail. It does not only mean in clothing; by the way she dresses, but in everything she does, she provides her outstanding efforts.

From the stories Shana has told me about her childhood, her parents always looked after her as loving parents should. You can tell that her parents were always people of great attentiveness because of the way they dressed their child, and how that child naturally developed the same custom to be attentive by how they dress themselves.

The cheerful pleats on various skirts, wraps in dresses, casual wear, each garment was carefully chosen for a specific purpose and function. You can tell Shana is versatile in the way she dresses in order to adjust herself in all types of occasions.

The very first glance at Shana Ramnarian, you can tell there is a lot of cheerful mystery to uncover. Shana's up-brining led her to become the successful business woman and fashion-icon she is today.

I have had the privilege to glimpse into Shana's fashion evolution personally over the years, however, I hope this book brings forth to you a brand new insight on Shana Cromwell-Ramnarain.

E.I.M

# Acknowledgement....

I would like to give thanks to my mother & my father.

Thank you Dad, for always being wellkept, clean & organized . Thank you for consistently showing me the significance of class, tradition and elegance throughout life.

I would also like to thank my Mom, who showed me not only how to be put together, but to be beautified in my own way at the same time. She taught me how to embrace my femininity, beauty & softness in order to express my creativity.

I thank both my parents, whom did their very best to provide me with all the materials I would need to let my creativity come alive in my dress; from childhood into adulthood my style is a transforation of my parents'.

## Chapter 1: American Dream

One of my earliest memories, was when my father and I first moved from Guyana, South America to Queens, New York in January 2002 when I had just turned four. Back at our apartment in my grandmother's house in Montrose, Guyana, my father and I left for Cheddi Jagan International Airport for our flight into America. It was sunny and bright when we boarded in Guyana, and cold and chilly in America once we arrived. We stayed with family on Dunton ave in Hollis, Queens, at my cousin's house, at the very top of the only hill in the neighborhood.

As I boarded the plane with my father, I was jumping around in my white, frilly dress as we got to our seats. My dress was white, with long material that *suspended* all the way down to my ankles from the cinge at the waistline. I was a baby, of only 3 or 4 years, so the dress was very small in size. The sleeves were a gentle, see-through satin material, *adhered* to the hem; colored a bright white. The dress had many layers that were finished with a lettuce edge. It was one of many special white dresses I had, but this one was loose enough for me to be comfortable in on our travel.

Modifying my hair, my mother *wrapped* my hair into two ponytails, adorned with two white bubble hair ties. They sat atop my head like a decoration, holding my unruly hair in place. She *brushed* my hair and teeth, and applied lotion to moisturize my skin. Besides my skin and hair, my mom cut my nails, keeping them short and clean, making sure my outfit and I looked put together. Since I was a child, I had nothing else to modify.

I loved this outfit because it's one of the earliest memories I have, going from my home in Guyana, leaving behind my mom for a short time while her papers got sorted and coming to America with my dad to see the rest of my family. I reunited with my older cousins, who had immigrated to America before my father and I. I can be at ease when traveling with my dad, at the end of our trip, we took a beautiful photo of us sitting together with my cousin when we eventually did arrive in America, it's one of my favorite pictures to date

Chapter 1: American Dream



## Chapter 2: Happily Ever After

My cousin Mona Got married on May 5, 2005, at that time I was only seven years old. She was the closest thing to a big sister I had, so when she got married, I was one of the flower girls for her wedding. The reception was beautiful, held at an Indian event hall called The Cotillion on Jericho turnpike in New York. From what I can remember, it was a spacious but cozy hall. The entranceway lobby was lined with luxurious glass walls and a diamond-studded chandelier that spanned the entire ceiling. My family, and that of the grooms fully occupied the hall to its brim. In the back of the hall, there was a beautifully warm outdoor fireplace seating area. It was a lovely addition to this chilly wedding night.

My dress was a traditional Flowergirl white dress, with a square neckline and capped sleeve which left an overlapped, folded effect on the neckline of the dress. The fabric that was overlapped, *suspended* off the shoulders of the dress. The torso of the dress was *fitted* to the body, while the waistline puffed down to floor-length. The outer layer of the dress was made of a smooth satin finish. The dress was very plain in design, but came with accenting gloves. The gloves were trimmed with white lace, *wrapped* around the wrist of the glove, a satin finish also adorned the body of the glove.

That morning, I got ready for the evening. After showering and getting dressed, my mother added jewelry to my look. I wore white pearl earrings, and a matching necklace to compliment the ensemble. Afterward, we traveled to the bride's house to meet with the rest of the bridesmaid party. The stylist did my hair in a pinned-up look. She *brushed* my hair into a swooping side bang, with the rest of the length curled, and *pinned* to my head. I wore no makeup as I was young, but had rhinestone studded pins *inserted* into each loop pinned to my hair.

I remembered this time and this outfit, because I was one of two flower girls. The other girl was the same age as me, we were like two best-friends for the time being. The coincidental thing is, she had the same name as me. We hung out every recital and rehearsal, and during every stage of celebration (Hindu-American blended weddings have many days of celebration). We ran around all night during the party, it was a beautiful & memorable celebration with my entire family.



*Chapter 2: Happily Ever After*



## Chapter 8: Mom n' Dad

My childhood was sweet when my parents were still together, we frequented the mall for family days with my brother and grandparents. We would drive to Green Acres Mall in Valley Stream, although we lived in Queens. We moved to Long Island later on in this book. The mall was always full of people and lively back in the 2000's. At this time, it was close to Christmas, so the mall was decorated with Christmas cheer and glamour. We spent most of our time in Macy's, my mom and grandma loved to shop for household items and clothing while my dad and brother frequented other video game and tech stores. After we shopped, we'd observe the mall's holiday attractions and food court.

I wore rugged, straight-legged Levi jeans. I wore a bright red, long sleeve cotton shirt from Old Navy, and my trusty blue raincoat. My raincoat was waterproof and blue, with white flowers all over it. The inner layer of the jacket was made of a bright contrasting red, mesh, *adhered* to the outer layer by its bright blue zipper. My mom dressed me in white sneakers, and a blue bucket hat to match. That raincoat was my favorite and always accompanied me wherever I went.

When my family would go to the mall, I would *wash* my face beforehand. My mother would *brush* my hair and *wrap* two pieces into mini ponytails, and let the rest fall naturally on my shoulders. I wore pretty earrings of my choice, *inserted* into my pierced ears, and usually wore bows *clipped* onto my hair. The ensemble was made for a frolicking child, out with her family, which is exactly what I did.

I remembered this jacket because I always went out with my parents with it on. When I attended preschool, I clung to it, even though oversized at the time, in the stroller while my mother walked home with me. It was a unique but necessary item for me, as a rambunctious little girl who loved to play and jump, this jacket protected me from falls and reminds me of sweeter times. It was a piece of clothing I always remembered reaching for whenever we left the house.

Chapter 8: Mom n' Dad



## Chapter 4: Recital Attire

In 2009, I was about 11 years old, and my father had enrolled me in piano lessons for about a year at a music school in Forest Hills. After about a year with our instructors, we had a piano recital in Manhattan at Carnegie Hall. When we arrived, the hall was full of invited members of the school, everyone dressed in formal attire from students to our music teachers, parents, and hall staff. The hall was beautiful inside, architecturally gorgeous with deep, tall ceilings; the grand piano sitting center stage. The seats were lined with red velvet, and bright golden decorative lights separated the rows in the audience.

The dress I wore was a black, formal dress *wrapped* at the torso area in diagonal, layered fabric. My mother and I looked for a long time before the recital to find a dress that would fit the occasion. It had thin black straps, knee-length with multiple layers of black tulle *adhered* to the waistline. The dress was simple, and the dimension of the textiles spoke for its elegance. Each layer on the wrapped torso area was *layered*, creating overlapping lines across the bust in a crossing design.

For my piano recital, classy, formal jewelry and modifications were required. My mother *straightened* my hair at home. I *brushed* and *pinned* my hair into a half-up, half-down hairstyle. My sleek hairstyle matched the dark, classic color of my dress. I painted my nails red for the occasion and kept them very short. I wore a crystal brooch my mother gave me for special occasions, *clipped* into my dress, made of beautiful crystals in the shape of a swan.

This was an extremely memorable time for me, for the past year, I had been uncomfortably learning new songs on the piano with my new instructor, after they switched out the one whom I favored. I hated taking classes with the new instructor, but at the recital, all my efforts paid off. I remember my music sheets sliding down in the middle of my performance, but at that point I had memorized every song I preformed and effortlessly continued. Seeing my parents in the crowd made me so happy.

Chapter 4: Recital Attire



## Chapter 5: Remember Your Feminine Felion

I love to go shopping, often. Sometimes I go with friends, sometimes I just need to be by myself. A few weeks ago, I went to the mall by myself for the first time in a long time. I love spending time with my boyfriend and would have loved if he came, but he has been working a lot lately; so I decided it would be a solo day as I had a busy week prior. I didn't want anyone to come with me, I just wanted to be in my own energy and space. I was getting ready to go to Green Acres mall, I grew up in Valley Stream in my adolescent years and this was the mall I was most accustomed to visiting. I got ready at home, at my mom's house in Queens. It was a very personal time for me; an opportunity for me to spend time in my own space of beauty while I tried to style my new shirt in my room.

The top I wore was white at its base color but had a beautiful light blue floral print all over it; this made the top itself look like it was light blue. It had white buttons *adhered* to the fabric, running from the top to the bottom of the shirt face. The torso was very ribbed and stretchy which accentuated the bust line. The neckline was mostly straight, almost square, but semi-sweetheart. It was also lined with white lace, *attached* to the neckline. The wrist of the sleeve had an elastic band *inserted* into the hemline, this created a scrunched feeling throughout the puffy sleeve. It was a very beautiful, feminine top.

That day, I *washed* my body & hair, I went for a *straightened* look for my hair that day, allowing my hair to fall gently on my back in an *elongated* style. I *inserted* my earrings into my ears and *applied* natural makeup consisting of bb cream, simple eye makeup & lip gloss. I wore minimal jewelry, jeans & a Gucci belt with this look. I *sprayed* Dior's *My Way* all over my body & my outfit was complete.

This top meant a lot to me, even though it's a recent addition to my closet. I used to be extremely bold in the way I styled myself, revealing a lot of skin and wearing many different fabrics, colors, messages and patterns. Over the years, as I transitioned into adulthood I lessened my style and went for a more conservative, modest look. I realized that recently I had been wearing a lot of solid, monochromatic and very basic colors. I felt that this was taking a toll on my personality, *dulling* the way I felt and lived life. When I bought this top, I had no idea I would wear it for a simple day out with myself as I now see it as "too dressy". I chose decoration, and to dress myself up with this patterned item that I normally wouldn't wear. I felt like this shirt was too much when I first put it on, but as the day went on, I actually loved my outfit and remembered that my inner boldness always works for me. It gave me the confidence and fit I needed to enjoy my entire day.

Chapter 5: Remember Your Feminine Felion



## *Chapter 6:* Red Hot House Warming

When my family & I first moved into Long Island, our house needed to be emptied and renovated. We lived in Valley Stream, but it took us a few years to finish the home. The previous owner had foreclosed the house, so we had all of their belongings still abandoned inside. They had boxes of clothing that we sifted through to find anything we may want to keep. In one of these boxes, I found a simple, beautifully bright red shirt. When my family took a trip down to Florida, I brought this shirt along with all of my other outfits although it was only a simple red shirt. It was a staple in my closet now, but I found it in such an unexpected place. Nothing else of the previous owners had fit me, this shirt seemed so out of the blue, yet perfectly made for *me*. I wore this shirt when we just stayed in our vacation home in Florida, it's a part of my memories from that family vacation. I have about 6-7 cousins who came on that trip, we had a great big house to ourselves in St cloud, Florida.

The shirt was a tight fitting, elastic and cotton blend shirt. It was colored a very bright, burgundy/red color. It had a scalloped trim *attached* to the neckline, sleeves and hem. It was a simple shirt, with nothing else on it; but it fit me so well. The material was sturdy, a good thickness & stretchy, and *accentuated* my waistline. The sleeves were not full, but *cut* into a half-sleeve design that accented my shoulders and arms. The simple cut sleeves and scalloped lining made for a calmer tone in this red hot item. The top was not a full length top, it was a bit short, and *hung* directly beneath my navel.

On this trip when I wore this casual piece, I was usually at home with my cousins, or getting ready to go somewhere in the Florida city scene. I *washed* my body & hair, and *curled* my hair for this look, as that was my signature at the time. I *pinned* my bangs back, and allowed the rest of my hair to flow in their beautiful, uniform curls. I *applied* thick, bold eyeliner which brought out my eyes, mascara and highlighter. I *clasped* my bracelet on, *inserted* my earrings, and wore no other jewelry. I wore this top with jeans, and casual shoes with nothing else. My makeup spoke for most of my look, so I liked to dress down; hence the basic nature of this shirt.

This shirt means a lot to me, because I found it when my family was first moving into our home in Long Island. I grew up in my home in Long Island, from the ages of 12 to 21. This shirt stayed with me through most of my high school career, it seemed to have been made fit for me as I grew. It fit me better than most of my other clothing that I would buy at the store, in my size. It surprised me how well something that I didn't pick out myself could stay with me for so long. I even found myself wanting this shirt on vacations, and even now in my adulthood, wishing that I could have this shirt to wear again for a comfortable fit that still makes you look good. A lot of times, beauty means pain & discomfort. But with this shirt, I am reminded that beauty was very simple.



Chapter 6: Red Hot House Warming



## Chapter 7: Monkey Say, Disney Do.

When I was about six, my family took a trip to Disneyland. My mother and father were still together, My middle brother was about two, but my youngest brother had not been born yet. We traveled to magic Kingdom from JFK Airport in New York to Florida, and stayed in the Disney suites at the resort. I remember waking up in the morning, having my mother dressed my brother and I, and we were on our way to the park. I remember, back in the early 2000s, Disney had decorated their resorts beautifully, elegantly, and very luxuriously. The resort was very grand and spacious, and obviously themed with your favorite characters. We spent all day at the parks, visiting every single attraction and spending time as a family together.

On this day, my outfit was what I remembered. I wore a pink shirt with a photo of a monkey *applied* with a hot print on the front of the shirt. I wore open-leg jeans, which were baggy enough that the fabric *hung* off my little body. My shoes were white and navy blue sketchers, with the bulky laces *tied* in little bow shapes. My hair had gone through an unfortunate haircut prior to this trip, and was *cut* very short, like a pixie. I had thick hair, so I looked almost like Dora the Explorer. Nevertheless, I had fun. The outfit was very simple and fit for a little girl running wild at disney world.

My mother dressed me for the day by *washing* my body & hair. She *applied* sunscreen for the hot day, and *combed* my unruly hair. It laid puffy yet straight, falling just above my shoulders. She *tied* my shoelaces and *removed* my gold earrings. I'd be jumping about, so she wanted me to be as free as I wanted without getting hurt or losing the earrings. I was a free-roaming child who just wanted to have fun, so she kept my outfit simple.

This outfit was special to me, now in my adult years it makes me laugh. I always saw this photo with the specific monkey shirt, and laughed at how short my hair was. My mother was giving me a trim one day, but I couldn't hold still and ended up with a very short haircut. My hair was very thick and voluminous, to see it cut very short down to my ears was very funny. I wore this outfit one of the times my family went to Disneyland, while my parents were still married. The shirt was one of my favorites that I always picked for school. My middle brother was very young, almost a baby still, our sneakers matched with my mom and dad's. These little details mean the world to me as an adult. These are one of the fondest, earliest memories of my childhood that I am blessed to look back at.

Chapter 7: Monkey Say, Disney Do.



## Chapter 8: Slim & Fit. Reliable Bit.

In 2015, I was seventeen years old. My mother's side of the family lived in Guyana, but they had been visiting us for a few months now. They stayed with us at my mom's house, and we planned a trip up to Niagara Falls in February. My two brothers, my mom, two of my cousins and my uncle packed ourselves into the car and drove up to Canada. We stayed in a Hilton hotel on the New York side of the border, the hotel was so empty at this point in the year we had the entire pool to ourselves. The next day, we got ready and accessed the park. We walked along the *Three Sisters Island*, the highest point of the park where you had an immaculate, beautiful view of the sheer depth of the Niagara Falls. since it was February, it was very cold, but a winter jacket would suffice. My mother and I got a photo together standing before the falls, with no other people around. It was as if the world was abandoned, and my family was the only people visiting the falls at this time of year. It was pleasantly empty.

On this day, I wore my favorite north face jacket. The outer layer was made of a black, waterproof material, and had hot pink accents *adorning* the inner lining of the hoodie, as well as the zipper. The color was so vibrant against the dark black color. The jacket had a double layer *inserted* into the outer layer and was made-up entirely of the hot pink color that was used on the accents; a huge contrast to the outer layer. The inner layer was comprised of a bubble filling, which made it very puffy and insulating. The bubble pattern was *sewn* into the jacket, creating square-shaped pockets. The two layers were connected by a hot pink zipper, as well as hot pink buttons which *adhered* to one another magnetically. The hoodie also *extended* past your mouth & face when worn, and had a Velcro attachment which gave you protection from the ice cold wind. The two parts would *adhere* together. The hoodie was *detachable* entirely, *attached* to the jacket with its own clasps & buttons.

On this day, I *washed* my body but left my hair alone. It was too windy to do any open-haired style, so I *wrapped* my long hair into a tight bun, and *clipped* on my headwrap to keep it secure & keep me warm. I *secured* both layers of my jacket together by *adhering* the double layer buttons together. I wore a scarf which I *wrapped* around my neck, between my hoodie clasp. I wore jeans, and boots for the remainder of my outfit. my skin was moisturized by *applying* lotion, and beautified a little more with makeup.

This jacket was with me for many years in high school. It fit me so perfectly, both layers of the jacket accentuated my waist and catch me very warm period most winter jackets were big and bulky, and always made me feel fat. This one was sleek, and fit me ever so perfectly. The double layer gave me an option on days when I didn't want to wear black, and it made me feel beautiful throughout the best years in high school as well as some years in college. I distinctly remember this jacket on this trip, because of the picture with my mom. Usually at Niagara Falls there's a lot of people everywhere, but I cherish that moment that I had with just my mom and I standing against the waterfall alone. It's a photo I will cherish forever!

Chapter 8: Slim & Fit. Reliable Bit.



## *Chapter 9: Friendship Falsity.*

In the year 2019, I was deceived by someone who I considered at the time to be my best friend. Our relationship had already begun to dwindle, until the breaking point at her wedding on August 3, 2019. The day of her wedding was beautiful yet strange. I woke up & got dressed at my house, and made my way to another bridesmaid's house. We waited a while at her house fully dressed in Indian clothing before heading to the mosque. The Masjid Ar-Rahman was located on 98-10 211th street in Queens Village. The building had a beautiful, cream-colored stone face, with an intricately layered design on its transparent glass façade walls. It was a warm summer morning as we waited the arrival of the other bride's maids. Within the hall, beautiful golden decorations hung from the walls, chairs, tables and adorned the interior of the room. It gave the small event space a glimmer and warm glow of glamour. The sun refracted beautifully off the glass walls and highlighted the 2nd story staircase in golden sunlight. The floral decoration which adhered to the handrails seemed to bloom in the sunlight. The wedding hall was a beautiful sight for what ended up being a rather strange event.

I had worn many Indian outfits in the past throughout my life, so this wedding outfit was no big deal to me. My mother assisted in helping me with the 2-piece outfit consisting of a cropped top with long, 3/4 sleeves, this which we called a *Lehenga*. The sleeves had pink embellishment *adhered* to the ends and a sweetheart neckline *lined* with hand sewn beads. The skirt had an elastic waistline *inserted*, but the fabric of the skirt was extremely long, and *hung* loosely on the floor if not wrapped correctly. The skirts fabric consisted of two layers, *sewn* together. A mauve pink silky layer covered the base, while an extremely embellished rose gold lace fabric was *attached* directly on top. The end of the skirt fabric was made only of the embellishment lace. The fabric extended beyond the length of the skirt, to act as the dupatta or as Americans may know it, the scarf. The outfit was meant to be worn as a singular *wrapped* piece.

In the morning after *washing* my body & hair, I *applied* my face makeup and **curled** my hair. My mother helped me *steam* the fabric of the skirt, as well as *Folding* the long pleats into the skirt. I *wrapped* the fabric around my waist, securely *pinning* it at my waistline, and again *wrapping* the rest of the fabric around once more. My mother helped me *tuck* the end of the fabric into its place, which allowed the beautiful pleats to hang directly in front of my outfit. I *loosened* the strings in the back of the top, and *slid* the decorated top piece carefully over my head. Much care should be taken when putting on cultural Indian clothes as to not scratch yourself or ruin the many embellishments. Lastly, my mother helped me *adhere* my dupatta to my left shoulder. The fabric was made to *hang*, up and over your left shoulder after your last wrapping of the skirt. In the end, I stood like a doll, getting pinned and tucked by my mother in my celebration outfit. I *hooked* my tikka, or head jewelry, at the crown of my head, allowing the Diamond to *fall* into my forehead & match the Diamond earrings that I *inserted* into my ears.

This wedding was especially memorable for me, but not in the way that you would think. The bride & I were good friends in the past, but that friendship seemed to have faltered on her account the days prior to her marriage, for reasons I found out years later. I still wanted to be a good friend, and show my love and support at an important life event for her, so I went anyway.

The wedding day in reality, was full of plenty of animosity. The bridesmaids all got dressed alone at our homes instead of together, at the bride's home. Usually in Indian culture, weddings are a very social event where every member of the bridal party is included, and a familial energy is shared in the days prior to the marriage especially amongst the bridal party in preparation for the bride's wedding. This wedding was different; it was cold, independent & disconnected. Once everyone arrived, no one spoke, and tensions could be felt between members of the bridal party due to unspoken drama. The bridal room was heavy, I began to wonder why I even attended after a while; but I remembered my outfit costed nearly \$400, so I attended as I couldn't get my refund back.

The day following, I cut ties with this "friend" as her intensions of slighting me became very clear after the wedding. This outfit is extremely significant to me, it's the signifier of my biggest lesson learned in life about friendship. every time I see this outfit, I remember the heartbreak of betrayal from another female whom I trusted, as well as the steps I took to ensure reliable, trustworthy, honest & loving friends filled my circle now.

Chapter 9: Friendship Falsity.





## Chapter 10: Graduated Growth.

My brother's graduation from our high school in Valley Stream took place in June 2019. We both attended Valley Stream North High School, located in Franklin Square in Northern Valley Stream, Long Island. Our school had about four floors, a wide, but short structure to its brick building. The school was surrounded by grass, everywhere. We had a large football & baseball field in our school's backyard, and green fields in the front yard of the school. The graduation ceremony took place in the back field, just beyond the track. It was an extremely sunny, beautiful, and bright summer day. My father, mother, youngest brother and I watched as my middle brother walked down the stage and graduated from high school! Afterwards, my family navigated to the front yard of the school, to meet with my brother and take pictures one last time of his senior year.

At the time, I was going through a transformation of my wardrobe, so my outfit felt very thrown together. At the time I had lost significant weight, so I wore cotton dress pants that were slightly a little too big in the color black from H&M. The pleats were *pressed* into the front of the pants. Although the pants were slightly too big and *hung* off my waistline, I *attached* a belt to the loops and *pulled* it tighter to *singe* my waist. I paired this with a simple black cotton tank top from forever 21, and a gorgeous olive-green blazer. This blazer was my first, and had zippers *sewn* into the front pockets. The blazer had a large lapel, which *laid* over the torso. The olive blazer had small, thin shoulder pads *inserted* in the top to give the jacket some shape.

In the morning, I *washed* my hair and body as usual, and *applied* foundation, lipstick and eyeliner. I *hooked* my necklace clasp onto my neck, and *inserted* my earrings. I *wrapped* my hair up into a blonde bun, and *attached* my sun glasses into my hair as an accessory with Bobby pins. I curled the ends of my bangs, sprayed perfume & began heading out the door with my outfit on. I wore boots which I *tied* together the laces of behind the tongue of my boots; a habit I had since childhood.

I remembered this day because it signified a lot for me. At the time I was in the midst of graduating from my own mindset. I had left behind everything restricting me, and decided to embrace freedom for my own well-being. This outfit, although simple, was pretty to me and a true expression of who I was at the time. I picked this outfit without worrying what anyone else thought and did the best with what I had at the time. I was going through an entire renewal of personality; allowing myself to embrace my own personal style instead of it being dictated to me. This was a heavy choice for me, and one that has proven to be correct and supportive for me time and time again. This outfit was my symbol of returning; returning back to who I was; and it only got better from that day.

Chapter 10: Graduated Growth.



## *Chapter 11: Quiet Time*

For my undergraduate degree, I attended Queensborough community college in Bayside, New York. The campus was beautiful, consisting of many different buildings. The school is surrounded by green fields, almost like my high school but nevertheless, it was a comfortable school. The buildings were beautiful, and it really felt like an academic environment. The school had many utilities, such as a beautiful library, an outdoor and indoor lunch room, as well as a gymnasium, which I ended up using often. My time at QCC was very enjoyable for me, I spent a lot of time at school during my semesters there. I loved every second of it. Most days, I would go into school in the afternoons, but not leave until late in the evening. Leaving the school, it was always very dark, but well lit. I was never scared, as there were always other students around, waiting for the same bus as I was.

I love going to school, and simply completing my work. Most of all, I loved to dress the part. My outfits were always business casual and on this day, I wore my favorite pants. They were dark, navy blue, and *suspended* all the way down to the length of the floor. The fabric was silky, but definitely mixed with polyester. The fabric was extremely loose, and *flowed* every time I took a step with the open bottom design. I wore a V-neck, long sleeve T-shirt. The T-shirt was fit to body, so it nearly *adhered* to my skin. I *attached* a belt to the waistline of my navy pants, *buckled* my black boots & *tied* the knot on my black wool pea coat.

To get ready for school in the morning, I would *wash* my hair and body as usual. I never wore face make up, but I did *apply* primer and eyeliner only. I tried my hair, then I *curled* the blonde pieces into tight coils. I *inserted* diamond studded earrings and *clipped* on my name necklace. I would normally *wrap* my head with a scarf, and be on my way.

I remember this outfit, because I used to spend many nights at QCC by myself, studying or completing schoolwork. The year prior, I wasn't able to attend school due to unforeseen circumstances at the time, so being back in school again felt really great. I love to dress the part, and I love to complete my work, so business casual was also my go to. I have so many good memories at the school, simply because I enjoyed my time being alone there. I had many friends, but I really enjoyed my solitude in being a college student. Many nights I would spend my time at the art exhibition, sometimes I would go with friends, but the environment of the school was very peaceful and exactly what I wanted. I often miss the energy of the school, it reminds me of my days at Adelphi university in Hempstead as well; very serene, and very calm.

*Chapter 11: Quiet Time*



## *Chapter 12: E n'S*

Date night with my boyfriend is always a joyful time. No matter what we do, I always end up, laughing, and having so much fun with him. On this night, we were going to our favorite Dim Sum restaurant, Baodega. We love pork buns, and they had the best I've ever had so far in the city. Located on 19th street & 6th Ave in Chelsea, my boyfriend Eliel Morales & I were set out for a dinner date after work. I met him in the city, and we enjoyed a walk in the warm September air. When we arrived, the restaurant was dimly lit and beautiful. Clean, well-organized & full of patrons getting serviced, we walked deeper into the restaurant and requested the garden area. The area was in the back of the restaurant, outside and completely empty! We were lucky enough to have the entire place to ourselves. There were beautiful fairy lights all around the entire outside patio, a very romantic setting for just my love & I.

This night, I wore a casual but subtly sexy dress. The dress was sexy in that it didn't show any skin but *accentuated* the right parts of my body to show off my shape. The dress was a mid-thigh length button up shirt. It had long sleeves, and delicate white buttons *adhered* to the cuffs and along the front. The dress had two belt loops *attached* at either side, as well as a long sash/belt, *looped* through the belt holes. I *tied* the sash, at the back instead of the front. This created a beautiful bow that sat at the base of my back and allowed the rest of the sash to *suspend* down to the floor like a beautiful trail. I paired this cream-colored ensemble with black, thick leggings as it was a bit cold, and I wanted to cover my exposed skin. I paired this with black booties which gave me a boost in height and a swagger in my walk. I *inserted* my earrings, *attached* my bracelet, and *sprayed* YSL's Black Opium and was on my way.

That night, I *washed* my hair & body as usual, as well as *cut* my nails down. They were a bit long and I wanted shorter length for my romantic evening. I *dried* my hair with my blow drier, and used a curling wand to *curl* tight, tiny coils into my hair. This gave me much so volume. I *pinned* each curl up into itself and allowed it to dry while I *applied* natural makeup. I *painted* bold eyeliner wings with a glossy lip, keeping things natural. I *tied* the bow in the back and adjusted its height so it *sat* right atop my lower back, zippered my booties and left the house.

I remembered this moment because it was one of many special nights with my loving boyfriend. Eliel has always illuminated the adventurous side of me; anywhere I want to go, he's willing to come with me to discover the ride. Baodega was a random restaurant I just happened to go into one random day, and we had such a good time that night before heading out to a party later on. The setting of the outside garden was so romantic and beautiful, and allowed a perfect background for Eliel to capture some shots of me, like he always does. The air was warm, and we were both hungry. We shared a good meal between laughs, taking photos and excitement. Nights like these are simple, and our total was under \$25. My most cherished memories don't always cost a lot. These are the memories I hold near and dear to my heart; moments which make our love for each other grow fonder, and stronger. Eliel is my best friend and partner in life; I always have the best times with him; he is the most loving, warm, and fun complement to my life. This was only one of many of our magical nights together, and we have many more yet to come.

Chapter 12: E n'S



## *About the Author....*

Shana Cromwell-Ramnarain was born in the beautiful tropical town of Georgetown, Guyana, and came to America with her father in 2001. Since then, Shana has become a powerhouse of her own. Overcoming every hardship, Shana has built and managed a luxury service business while obtaining her Bachelor's degree in Business & Technology of Fashion at New York City College of Technology.

Shana is a woman of vision – whom aims to leave behind a legacy; not one of fame or notoriety, but one of genuine kindness, generosity, triumph, strength and resilience. These are some of the values Shana wishes to bring into the young minds of New York through her business ventures. Shana hopes to create and nurture an entity that encourages, motivates and offers relief, and *help* to any of those who may need it. She wishes to empower the young women of New York onto the right path.

Shana's love for thoroughness, high quality craftsmanship, teamwork, hard work, and her love for all things beautiful help her to create beautiful products which only benefit those in use. Creativity is something that when given the appropriate measure, can bring people together, create happiness & can bring something beautiful into the world which can only make it better.

Shana believes in confidence, honesty and being true to your heart and soul. She believes everyone has their own unique magic; when employed correctly, can help others discover theirs as well.