

Love me, Undress me

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Love me, Undress me

To my sweetest boy... I dedicate this to you, my wonderful boyfriend. You have changed my view of the world and my perception of life.

Thank you for teaching me what life is capable of offering. Thank you for teaching me what love is and can be. Thank you for being my love.

Prologue

Stefhanie Perez. The most meaningful person I met in my life. She was my best friend ever since high school. Our friendship started in 11th grade Earth science. We have shared many different moments. There were happy moments, sad moments, and funny moments too. Pulling all sorts of pranks on each other to just get a reaction. I would put her bag inside out and she would hide my things. Whether we got upset or mad at one another, somehow, we always came back to talking. We both had our separate friends but still managed to spend much time together. I loved listening to her talk about everything going on in her mind and she'd listen to everything I say. The thought of this friendship ever becoming anything more seemed impossible.

I was invited to this party by a friend. I haven't seen her in a while, and I asked her to accompany me. I knew I missed spending time with her, so I was glad she agreed. I'm always used to seeing her in hoodies, jeans, shirts, and t-shirts (our school uniform didn't help with expressing ourselves either). The outfit caught me by surprise. I thought she looked stunning. It made me realize how much she had grown since high school. Her mauve color outfit complimented her. I knew she was always beautiful, but seeing her that night made me realize more. It made me realize that we weren't just high school kids anymore and anything could happen. With a little push from a friend, I knew I had to ask her out on a date.

After reading this beautiful book I began to imagine myself walking through her brain seeing all these wonderful memories she holds of us. The stories, the dress, and the thoughts running through her head are a constant reminder that the clothes we wear hold a valuable meaning to us. Whether some may not think so, clothes are an expression of us. The way we present ourselves makes all the difference.

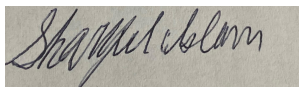
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephanie Perez", written on a light-colored, textured background.

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October 11, 2020- Party

Crispy air and wispy hair. The feeling of a wonderful October afternoon. There I sat on the edge of my bed wondering if I was going to go through with my plans. Thoughts raced through my head questioning my entire existence. “You’ve been waiting for this moment Stephanie... stop worrying so much and just get *dressed*.” It’s been almost a year since I first saw Shariful after a decade of not seeing each other and the one place we ended up meeting once again was at a party. I had waited three days before the event to ask my parents if I was allowed to go and to my surprise, my father said yes. I was shocked to know that this man that I had known my entire life was letting me go out. Of course, they asked me a billion questions that I didn’t have the answers to, “Is he picking you up?”, “Train or car?”, “Is it safe?” and all these other questions that made no sense to me. Regardless I had already chosen my outfit and I had already said yes, so there was no way I could go back on my word. It was around 8 pm when Shariful picked me up. My father introduced himself and made it very clear I had to be home at a certain time. When we got to the venue it took hours to find parking and the walk from the parking lot was excruciating especially in four-inch heels.

Curating this specific outfit in my head and the night before was no problem to me. I scrambled through my closet to see if I could find a last-minute outfit and finally, I came across the perfect outfit. I *curled* my hair with every strand falling as a ringlet. I Tied up my hair with bobby pins in a princess-style updo. I started with having my sister lend me her mauve blazer and skort suit set she had bought off of Yesstyle. I tried on the outfit with a basic white top she got from Forever21 and realized that the blazer was too much. I ended up hating it completely and wore it with a grey hoodie instead. A mauve skirt, a basic white top from forever 21, and a grey polo oversized men’s hoodie. I paired it off with a mauve Steve Madden four-inch heel.

The outfit I decided to wear that day held so much emotional value to me. I remember just going with something out of my comfort zone, but loving it. I looked beautiful that day and I know he thought so too because he asked me out on a date that same night. Which by the way is so crazy to me that someone I knew for a long time would want to date a shy girl like me. In the end, it all worked out perfectly fine.



October 15, 2020- Botanical Garden

I wasn't allowed to go out. I was stuck in a very tight predicament about whether I should cancel this date or face the consequences later. I was told "Never ask for permission, just ask for forgiveness" and that's exactly what I did. I wasted half my morning trying to prepare a speech on how to let my parents know that I went out. My father went to work that day so it was an easier risk to take. I got ready as quickly as I possibly could and walked inside my mom's room. I told her I'd be back and without a word she nodded her head as she continued to sleep. There I was getting let off the hook because I caught my mom at a good time. Shariful came to pick me up around 10 in the morning and we headed to the Botanical Garden located at 990 Washington Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11225. As chilly as it was I didn't remind myself to bring an extra layer of clothing to keep myself warm. As the day passed the night ended in a rush. My father called me yelling at me to come home. That's when I realized I should've not listened to the advice I had gotten and asked them first before I could go out. I ended up having to go home, but at least I enjoyed a car ride while holding hands.

Wake up Stefhanie! You're running late yet again. Another hectic morning in a hectic household. I woke up from my beauty rest and quickly jumped in the shower. The warm water hit my skin as I began to slowly wake up. I washed my hair and proceeded to quickly use my Not Your Mothers curling cream to form loose waves on my hair. I *scrunched* my hair up and down slowly forming my wave pattern. I scooped about a tablespoon of gel into my hair slowly raking it through my hair. I then continued to scrunch my hair to define the curls at hand. After I finished my curly hair routine I made my way back to my room. I wondered why I couldn't have picked out an outfit the night before and saved myself the trouble. I wanted to wear something that didn't stand out too much. Of course, it was my first date and I didn't have any girly clothes that I was willing to wear. I *applied* lotion to my damp skin and quickly began to look for my outfit. I chose a simple dark green oversized sweater from the Gap and a pair of semi ripped Calvin Klein jeans. I *fastened* the buttons on my jeans one by one making sure they were all secured. I threw on the oversized green sweater and tucked any loose fabric at the front into my jeans. I *secured* my jeans with a black belt and finished this last-minute ensemble with a pair of black, high-top Chuck Taylors.

Wearing this outfit made me realize how much I resort to baggy clothes to feel comfortable. I love the feeling of comfort and warmth and what better way to enjoy that than wearing the most casual oversized sweater. The outfit brought me back to a time where I felt free. A tender feeling came from my clothes because of how much I loved wearing articles of clothing that were 2-3 sizes bigger than my actual size. I wasn't only feeling comfortable, but beautiful as well because I was finally able to express who I was with the things I wear.



November 19, 2020- Aquarium

A month goes by and here I am about to go on my second date. The air was a lot colder so that meant we had to wear our jackets. I planned this date. Everything I wanted for this date went as planned. Shariful and I decided we would take a trip to the most iconic aquarium in New York which, funny enough is the New York Aquarium located at 602 Surf Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11224 by Coney Island. Shariful wanted to ask me to be his girlfriend on this day, but I was too nervous to even say yes. I was nervous overall!! I did not know if it was ok or not so I decided to wait a bit before I said yes. It was only fair for me and him to be able to connect and grasp the idea that once we were together our world would completely change. Vincent Van Gogh once said, "The Heart of a man is very much like the sea, it has its storms, it has its tides and in its depths, it has its pearls too."

I convinced my lazy self to shower the night before in case it was too cold to have my hair wet in the morning. As my hair does take a bit longer to dry in the winter I decided to tie up my hair in two Princess Leia buns. The morning of our date I quickly got up after hearing my alarm ring four times and went to brush my teeth as well as wash my face. After washing my face I *applied* some serums that would help with sebaceous filaments and oil production. I then *patted* on some lotion and sunscreen onto my face. After I was done with my skincare I *modified* the scent of my skin by applying my favorite lotion of all time. I used Shea Moisture's coconut and cactus water to quench and refresh body lotion. After I applied the lotion thoroughly I decided to wear a ribbed, white sleeveless top and layered it with the blue cardigan I purchased from Forever21. My jeans were my favorite part of the entire outfit. I had recently purchased them from Dollskill. They were asymmetrical button straight leg jeans and I loved them. I carefully *buttoned* up my jeans and put my socks on. I then paired off the entire outfit with a pair of blue new balances that I had also recently purchased. After I was done getting myself ready I *clipped* my hair up with bobby pins and did a princess side twist updo. To finish off the entire ensemble I wore my Longline Guess black coat and called it a day.

This outfit was by far my favorite one. I had just recently bought it and there was no way anyone was going to say anything about it. I looked extravagant when I wore this particular ensemble. Every article of clothing was very out of my comfort zone. I can say with all my heart that on this day I felt like the most beautiful girl anyone could lay their eyes on. It may sound a bit condescending, but I love feeling beautiful in what I wear. I love the color blue and how it easily makes me stand out. I felt amazing in the jeans that I had recently purchased. Overall I felt wonderful. I felt accomplished and I felt like I could easily conquer the world with my ensemble.



December 3, 2020- Park/House

My boyfriend Shariful lives in Old Howard Beach and if I wanted to expose him I would write his address. I am just kidding. On our third date on December third Shariful decided to invite me to his house. It was a very casual, friendly date that I didn't mind going on. I woke up pretty early that day and got dressed up and by dressed up I mean sweats and a top. It was a lazy type of day and I didn't wanna go through the hassle of looking for an outfit. My boyfriend gets to my house around 10:30 and I'm all nervous because I didn't exactly explain to my parents that I was going to Shariful's house. They just knew I was going on a date. Once I got in the car we headed our way to *Forest Park located at Myrtle Avenue, Union Tpke, Park Ln S, 11421*. It was a very funny experience because after we walked around the park talking and freezing our butts off. We got near this dome where people usually perform and saw a couple. The Chinese man (not assuming he told us he was Chinese) asked my boyfriend if he could record him singing because he wanted to post it on Facebook. We stayed a bit longer than we both anticipated for that same reason. The friendly old man ended up giving us a pack of strawberries that sadly I did not know because we were nowhere near vaccinations. After the park, we headed to his house and of course, I was nervous because who wouldn't be? His parents were home and I greeted them kindly. All we did that day was play Mario Kart and watch movies. I made him watch *After* with me and it was a very weird movie to watch on a first date.

I can't remember exactly how I prepared myself for this day, but I will make sure to explain it somewhat decently. I most definitely showered the night before so I could *curl* my damp hair fresh out of the shower. I parted my hair in the middle and made sure to add a leave-in conditioner on both sides. I then spun my hair counterclockwise and *tied* it up in a bun. So I was looking like Leia from Star Wars. I went to sleep late that night and still somehow managed to wake up early. I brushed my teeth and did my very intense skincare routine. I then pulled an outfit from my closet and put it on. I wore a corset cropped sweatshirt that I bought from Missguided and paired it off with a pair of black *oversized 90s* styled joggers that I also got from Missguided. I didn't want to go all out so I didn't wear any jewelry, just a pair of studs my father had gifted me during Christmas. I then decided to wear my black, high-top Chuck Taylors because they were brand new and I love Converse. I *laced* them up one by one making sure each string sat perfectly on the tongue of the shoe. I threw on a light, black Guess jacket that was gifted to me by my parents. At that I was out the door and ready to explore the world.

I felt very comfortable that day. I was able to wear sweats and a hoodie. I loved the idea of dressing comfortably for an ideal date. I was able to enjoy myself with the idea that my outfit made me who I was. I loved it. Overall I was feeling the warmth and I was also very comfortable in what I was wearing. It was a mix of feeling like I could take a nap anywhere or simply run a mile. There was no in-between. Everything just felt like it was in the right place.



December 25, 2020- Christmas

I'm Hispanic so I celebrate Christmas on the 24th instead of the 25th. So my boyfriend Shariful and I decided we should hang out that day. He suggested we go to a drive-in movie theater located in Brooklyn called Skyline Drive in NYC, 1 Oak St, Brooklyn, NY 11222. We would be exchanging Christmas presents because we both had decided and planned that we wanted to get each other something simple and sweet for our first Christmas together. We met up pretty early that day and went to get some Tacos Veloz which weren't my favorite but they were still good. After we had eaten we drove to the movie theater and watched *Home Alone* together. At some point I got my hand stuck on a necklace I was wearing and it broke. We had popcorn and water because again it was a drive-in movie theater, not an actual movie theater.

I remember exactly what I wore that day because the jeans I was wearing fit me quite big and it was at a point in my life where I was dropping weight like crazy. I used to weigh 120 pounds and now I'm 97 pounds which is bizarre to me. Anyway, I'm digressing here. I decided to wear handmade jewelry my sister Liz and my cousin Arlet and I made because we were bored. It was a pretty pink and blue choker with small beads. I used a fishing line string to hold the beads together (which by the way was a terrible idea because it broke that same night) and a clasp at the back. I remember doing my hair the same way which was the Leila look at night and the Rapunzel look in the morning. My hair was quite long so it would create these pretty soft waves in my hair. I opted for my Calvin Klein straight-leg mom jeans because they were once my favorite pair to wear. *I buttoned* up my jeans one by one because there was no zipper, just buttons. I threw on and *zipped* up my grey cropped sweater I recently had bought from Forever2 and once again my pair of black high-top Chuck Taylors.

This outfit made me realize how much a simple look can ruin your day sometimes. I remember feeling regretful because my jeans were a tad bit too big. My weight loss had taken a toll on me and I was clueless about it until that day. I didn't want something like a possible eating disorder to ruin the image of my body and the clothes I decide to put on my body. As ashamed as I was I wanted to learn how to accept my body for what it was and for what it became. I have grown to become a little more self-conscious about my eating habits. I didn't like the fact that the jeans that once fit me so perfectly had fit me so poorly.



January 1, 2021- New Year

This was most definitely a night to remember. I was full of all types of emotions that I didn't know how to contain and enjoy this day. So January 1st was pretty chaotic. I was having a new years party at my house and everyone was coming over. It was the last New Year that I was going to spend with my immediate family so I wanted to make the most of it. My outfit came in and to be very honest it was not made for me. The pants I had gotten were too big so I had asked my grandma to fix them up for me. It was late at night and I grabbed her sewing kit and she measured me and of course, worked her magic. Later that night she called me back and asked me to try it on so I did and it fit like a glove. I remember my boyfriend Shariful had also told me that he was gonna come by around midnight after the ball dropped so he could speak to my parents about us dating.

I quickly went to shower because back then my house was a can of sardines. So while everyone got the cooking ready I decided to get myself ready. I had to do everyone's hair that day so it gave my hair some time to dry up. I remember getting inspiration from Bridgerton and I wanted my hair done in tight curls. I grabbed the curling iron and quickly *clasped* each strand of hair to make sure they were all evenly nice and *curled*. One by one the ringlets fell upon my head and I was looking more and more beautiful. I was so excited to finally put on my outfit. First came the satin black suit jacket that was cropped and *adorned* with two crystal button gems on the right side. My pants were also satin with a wide leg. I got a pair of faux leather white boots that were 4 inches tall. There I was standing 4 extra inches taller and looking beautiful, but something was missing... my necklace. I quickly scrambled through my room and found a single-piece gold necklace that would complete my outfit. I *wrapped* the necklace around my neck and *clasped* them together so my necklace could be *secured*.

I loved this outfit very much. It made me feel beautiful without a doubt. It was by far my favorite outfit and I wouldn't have it any other way. The emotions I went through that night were all worth it. It was my first time wearing something out of my comfort zone and of course my boyfriend wanted to speak to my parents. They spoke to each other and everyone agreed. I was able to spend New Year with him for a bit and that made me happy.



January 12, 2021- Pollos Mario

This day was a very cold and breezy January morning in which me and my boyfriend Shariful decided to grab some brunch together. Surprisingly it was not hard to pick a spot because he just wanted to show me the world (kidding.) We ended up going to a nearby restaurant located at 6320 Woodhaven Blvd, Queens, NY 11374 called Pollos Marios. Once we got to the place I was given a cute necklace with a sea lion pendant and the letters S&S engraved onto it. I loved it! I was so happy my boyfriend Shariful had given me such a meaningful gift. Once we got to the restaurant we walked to one of the outdoor booths and sat down to eat. We chatted and ate our brunch. I ended up getting a limeade and a plate of rice, beans, salad, and grilled chicken. I wouldn't call it brunch, but it's Colombian food so it makes sense to me.

I faintly remember what I wore that day and I say faintly because this is something I threw on at the last minute. On winter dates I always decide to do my haircare and skincare at night only because I believe in this superstition my family taught me that it's not good to go outside with wet hair because it will potentially get me sick. I *modified* my hair the night before by *parting it to the side* instead of in the middle because I wanted my hair to flow like Jessica Rabbits' hair. I put my hair up into two side buns and again I looked like Princess Leia from Star Wars. The next morning I undid my hair and these beautiful *waves* released themselves. I threw on a sleeveless navy blue top from Forever21 that I borrowed from my sister Liz. I was surprised she let me borrow it because usually, she is stingy with her clothes. The top had a white border throughout and an *embroidered* rainbow in the middle. I threw on my favorite Calvin Klein jeans and fastened the buttons one by one. Typically I would zip up my pants but later that year I had bought jeans that had buttons as *ornaments*. I put on a pair of socks (and I don't even remember the color of those) and laced up my trusty old black, high-top Chuck Taylors. They are and will forever be my favorite kind of shoe. After putting on my clothes I threw on a black, Shooky sweater that my wonderful boyfriend Shariful kindly gifted me for Christmas. I then topped that off with my black, longline Guess jacket. Before I left my house I sprayed an entire bottle of Victoria's Secret Frosted Love Spell scent.

If I'm being completely honest with myself this wasn't my favorite outfit. I didn't like the fact that I had to wear my sister Elizabeth's shirt for my outfit to look well put together. I wasn't a big fan of how cropped the shirt was. It was the beginning of a winter story and I was not excited to be freezing at the door. I felt disappointed with myself because I wasn't able to properly dress myself that morning. Everything about that outfit was a big no to me.



January 19, 2021- My Birthday!

It's my birthday!! Of course, I would be excited for the one special, national holiday that only comes once a year. I love my birthday. I enjoy my birthday. I embody my birthday, but this year it didn't go quite as planned and it was upsetting to me. I spent part of my birthday with my boyfriend once again, but this time we invited my little sister Mari and my cousin Arlet. Since it was my birthday I was able to decide what I wanted to do so we went to Martha's Country Bakery located at 70-28 Austin Street Forest Hills, NY 11375. We drove there around 6 pm-7 pm and decided to get some Starbucks for everyone and cake. I wanted to try something new and decided to go for some Tiramisu. Was it good? Yes. Was it better than Stephanie's homemade cake? Not. That's all we went to do that day, celebrate my birthday with a piece of cake and drive back home.

There I was pondering about life and how it felt to finally be legal and for me to take my first tequila shot. I don't drink and I never drank before turning 21 so this was a coming-of-age ritual. For my 19th birthday, I wore a Harry Potter Gryffindor shirt with grey sweats. For my 20th birthday, I made myself a cake and wore a Harry Potter Gryffindor shirt with grey sweats. On my 21st birthday, Liz and I decided it would be good to keep the same tradition going. This day my outfit wasn't anything special and the only thing *modified* was my scent because I had taken a shower before leaving the house. I told Shariful that nothing was being done for my birthday and that my parents didn't even bother buying me a birthday cake. So when he told me he'd pick me up and take me to Marthas. I already had my burgundy Harry Potter Gryffindor, oversized men's t-shirt that I bought from Sears on and I was already wearing my trusty old, grey sweatpants that I think I might've gotten from Missguided. I also wore an oversized grey hoodie and my scarf.

The thought that I would make this outfit a tradition made me feel like I was doing something for myself. This outfit will have a meaning behind it every birthday. I love that I get to wear my two favorite things, sweats, and my Harry Potter t-shirt. I love Harry Potter and having this particular ensemble be a piece of me for however long warms my heart. I love being someone traditional and I feel like every time I wear this outfit I'll remember all my birthdays. I was feeling super grateful for my Harry Potter shirt because without it I wouldn't have been happy.

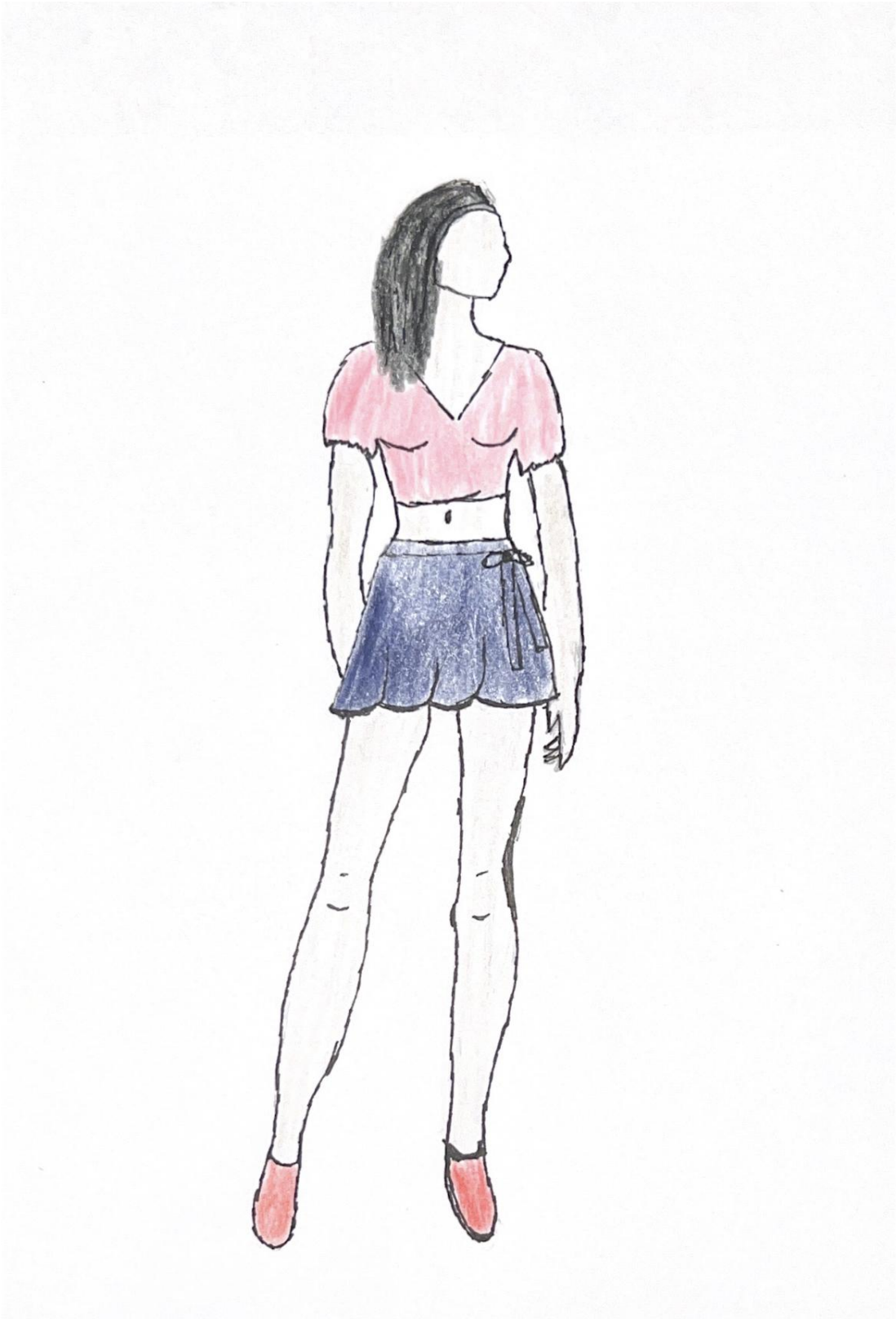


January 23, 2021- My Birthday Celebration!

For my birthday celebration, Shariful threw me a mini birthday surprise. He rented out an Airbnb located near Delancey and Bowery in Lower East Side Manhattan. The precise location is unknown. I tried looking for the place and it's not showing up. I was freezing that day and I remember walking near a taco place that looked pretty and we wanted to try it but ended up not doing so. When we finally arrived at the Airbnb it was nice and cozy. I changed into my birthday outfit and we watched movies, ate ramen, cut myself a birthday cake, and then we made our merry way home.

The morning of my birthday I made sure I was already nice and clean. I woke up that morning, brushed my teeth, washed my face, and after I was done doing that I hurried to my room and *straightened* my hair as quickly and as neatly as I could. The outfit for the day was an oversized, green men's sweater from Gap and a pair of asymmetrical button-up jeans from Dollskill. I wore my black Chuck Taylors and my jacket. As soon as we arrived at the Airbnb my outfit completely changed. I went to the bathroom and changed into my princess, puff sleeve wrap top. I carefully placed my arms through the sleeves and *wrapped* the top tightly and as fitting as I possibly could. I then put my satin navy blue skirt on and carefully wrapped it around my waist. I freshened up my skin by *applying* lotion and spraying perfume.

This outfit was by far my favorite. I felt like an actual princess wearing this outfit. I also felt very sexy. Not that I can't feel sexy in other types of clothes, but this pushed my limit and my comfort zone. I was able to fully express my capabilities and how I can dress without feeling ashamed of what I would like to wear. This was a huge stepping stone for me because I know the old me would have never worn this and what made it even more special was that I felt great in it. I felt great and I looked beautiful wearing my birthday ensemble.



April 24th, 2021- Coney Island

It was finally starting to feel like spring. The air was warmer. The sun was beaming and I was excited... not because it was almost spring but because I was able to go to my favorite place in the world! Yes, I love Coney Island. I enjoy going there every summer. Sadly because of COVID, I wasn't able to go during 2020. If it must be known (only because it's the most iconic place in the entire universe) Coney Island is located in the middle of nowhere. I'm just kidding! It's located at 1208 Surf ave, Brooklyn, NY 12224. Shariful and I decided that we should have some fun at the theme park with some friends because it's just what young adults do during nice weather. When we got to Coney the first ride we got on was the slingshot. I remember feeling terrified and calm at the same time that I pretty much didn't let the nerves get to me. It wasn't as bad as I thought, but I do remember feeling the autumn breeze wash away as the sun beamed in my face.

There it goes, my alarm goes off again as I slowly but surely get up and head to the shower. I was already running a tad bit late because I woke up very slowly. I clung onto the hinge of the shower as I turned it on with my eyes still closed. Washing away all my sins I stood in the shower and *cleansed* myself. I rushed up to my room and quickly skimmed through my clothes. And that's when it hit me. I grabbed my skincare and *applied* niacinamide onto my skin. I pumped a quarter-size amount of face cream onto my fingertips and slowly slathered that across my face. I then grabbed my sunscreen and applied that fifteen minutes before I headed out. I slathered Cetaphil body cream all over my body before fully putting on my outfit. I decided to wear the most random ensemble I could think of. Carefully I grabbed everything I needed and placed it on my bed. I unfolded my cream-colored slacks or pants that I had gotten off the sale section at H&M. I *fastened* the button and *inserted* the metal hook into the metal opening of my pants. I slipped on my brown v neck blouse and placed an argyle cardigan on top of it. The cardigan was made up of tans, browns, and greys which led me to *lace up* my grey, high-top converse which was never worn so it was my first time. I carefully *applied* and *rolled* on some Seven Virtues vanilla woods oil on my skin. I *modified* my hair by straightening it and having it be more voluminous by flicking the ends outwards. And with that my outfit was complete and I was ready to rush out of the house.

I remember feeling upset that I couldn't get my hair the way I wanted it to. I like the outfit as well but because of my hair, it ruined the entire look. My hair is such a huge part of my identity and it makes me upset whenever it doesn't go my way. The ensemble itself made me feel just pretty. I didn't feel much but pretty and casual. I loved how the colors complimented my skin and how nice I felt after I took the cardigan off. Overall I did feel pretty but I just wished my hair would've been better.

May 15th, 2021- Central Park

It was starting to feel like summer again. I can feel the sun kiss my skin again. I can feel the slight summer breeze as it washed away spring. Of course, it's still cold but nothing some light layering of clothes can't fix. The night before this date I asked my boyfriend Shariful what we would do. Usually, our dates are planned, but this was a last-minute idea. He decided that it would be a fun and cool experience to go bike riding together. It brought back a lot of vivid memories of how I would go bike riding with my mom and my aunts back in elementary school. My father would always get us bikes and we'd end up at the park having fun like kids usually do. We looked up places to bike in Central Park and we ended up going. The bike ride was amazing and so refreshing. We both got a workout from riding bikes. It was a cute relaxing date with the outdoors.

I wore a slightly different outfit on this day because I knew it was breezy, but not super cold where I'd be freezing my butt off. Was I wrong! I decided to keep it very casual, but it would've been a better idea to wear something in the athleisure wear department. I decided to go with a tan sweater-like vest with the arms being the length of a regular t-shirt. It was stolen from my uncle's closet because I liked it. Since I was bound to get dirty and feel dirty I didn't shower in the morning instead I showered the night before. I *tied* my hair up in a low bun because I knew we'd be doing outdoor activities. I was not very smart and decided that I wanted to wear my straight leg, high-waisted, ripped jeans that I had bought from DollsKill. I *fastened* my jeans with the button and zip them up. I paired the entire ensemble with a pair of Jordan's that I bought a while back because they were gold. I carefully *laced* up my shoe and left to go ride bikes. It was a terrible idea to wear jeans to the park and new shoes, but the risk was taken and I was fine in the end.

I remember feeling like the most powerful woman wearing this particular outfit. The memory is so vivid that I still know that it made me feel like I was challenging my masculine energy. Funny enough that was my uncle's shirt I wore and it was a different feeling than when I usually wore my more feminine clothing. I'm not trying to say feminine clothing doesn't make me feel this way it does and it makes me feel even more powerful, but I love the way the color tan looks on me. I love feeling like the outfit worked perfectly well with me.

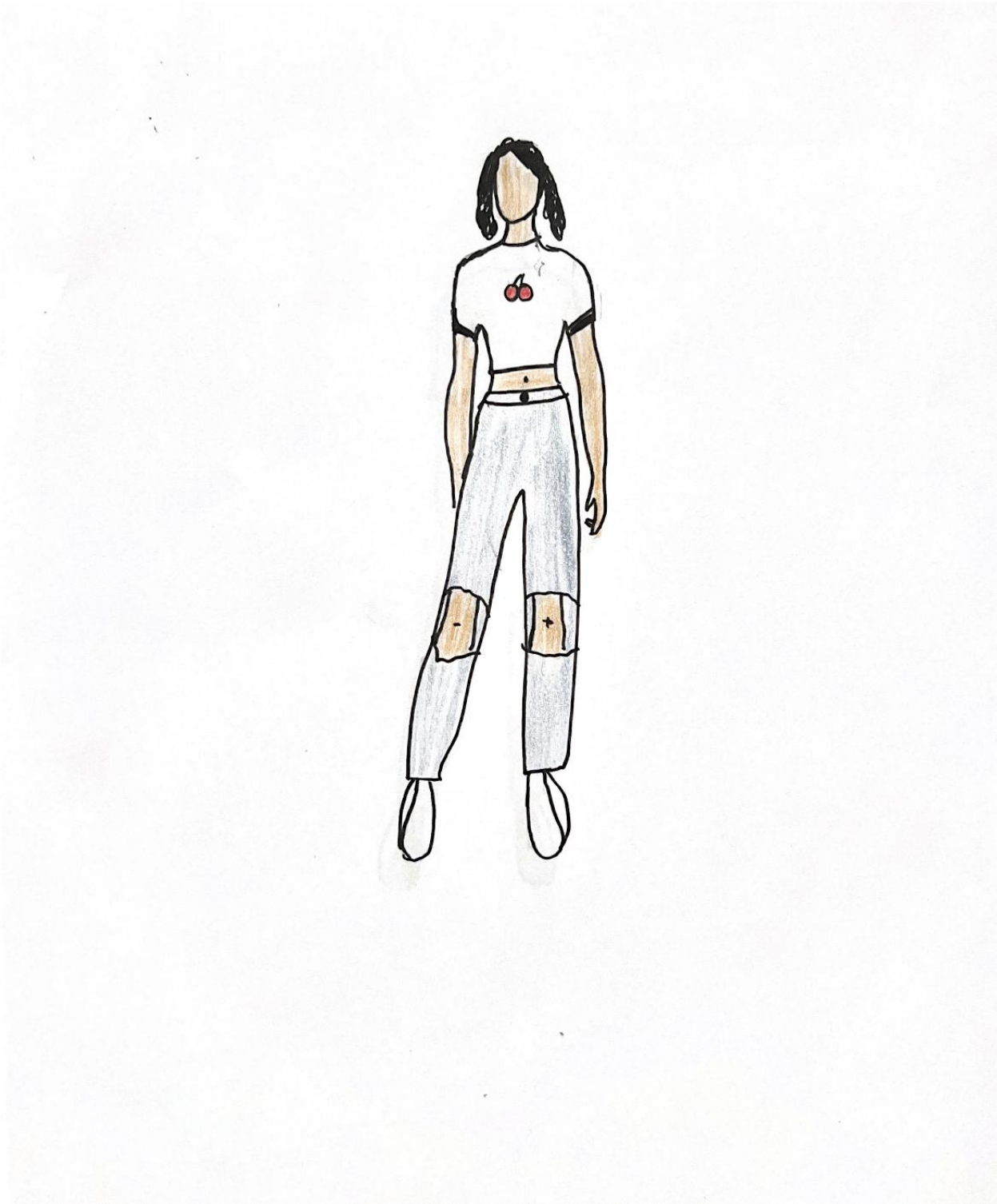


June 9th, 2021- My boyfriend's birthday!

This day was very special to me. Although my boyfriend Shariful had to work on his birthday, his friends and I were able to celebrate and make up for any lost time. The first place we went to for his birthday was Ichiran located at 132 W 31st St, New York, NY 10001. Before I made my way to the city I had to run a couple of errands. I had to take a car lesson and then after my lesson, I had to go home and make my way to the train station and then from the train station make my way to the ramen shop. We were successful in meeting each other up and having a nice ramen dinner date. After we ate we had planned to go to his friend's house where they cut him a Tyler the Creator ice cream cake. Omar and Joseph planned a cute little birthday celebration and we all had ice cream cake and enjoyed video games.

Cherries on my shirt with a cute pair of jeans! I rushed home as soon as I possibly could after my car lesson and changed. I picked out my favorite go-to outfit and wore it. I didn't have time to do much to my hair so I wore it out with its subtle waves. I *applied* some Seven Virtues vanilla woods oil onto my wrist, the inner corners of my elbows, my chest, and my neck. I quickly grabbed my white fuzzy cropped top with cute cherries on it and put it on. I then grabbed my DollsKill denim, high-waisted, ripped straight leg jeans and buttoned them up. I wore my regular platform white Filas and ran out the door to catch the train.

I felt very cute wearing this outfit. I know a few times after wearing it I got a few compliments here and there. It was more casual than usual because I was running around the city trying to look for last-minute things. I couldn't have felt anything else. I love my jeans. Every time I wear those jeans they make me feel powerful and great. My legs aren't super long so it does make me seem a bit awkward at times. I loved this outfit and the shirt always makes my waist look petite and I like the feeling of looking smaller.



July 17th, 2021- Mama's Birthday Bash

I love my grandmother and whenever her birthday rolls around we throw a huge party for her. Sadly because of COVID last year she wasn't able to spend her birthday with her family. My grandmother is a thyroid cancer survivor and although it's slowly getting to her she is the strongest woman I know and will ever know. This party was going to be the biggest birthday bash of the century. My mom had called up all her sisters and aunts to come by and celebrate her birthday with us. Thankfully she asked me if I wanted to invite my boyfriend. I wasn't hesitant about inviting him because he had previously met my family before and we all enjoyed his company. My family and I no longer live together so it was hard for us to go back and forth and have everyone be at one place at the same time. Half of us were trying to distract my grandmother while the other half sacrificed their time to decorate my backyard. Finally, the party rolls around and there is a crowd of people. My boyfriend Shariful finally joined us with his friend Omar and well the rest of the night everyone partied and enjoyed themselves.

I thought to myself "I have to get ready" if I didn't get ready before people showed up it would've looked bad on me. To make matters even more stressful I had to let my boyfriend know when I would be ready so he could make his way over to my house. My ensemble for my grandmother's birthday bash was by far my favorite party gown. I had recalled seeing an image of Kylie Jenner wearing this beautiful floral corset dress made by Duygu Ay. I stumbled upon a knock-off version Fashion Nova had made because of course they copy everything and sell it for cheaper with cheaper quality. I fell in love with the dress that there was no way I would've said no. I rushed to the bathroom and showered as quickly as I possibly could. As I waited for my cousin Arlet to arrive and for my sister Elizabeth to be ready I made the clear assumption that I should start getting ready before them in case anyone wanted me to do their hair. I had just come out of the shower and all I put on was lotion. I then slowly started to strip the dress of its layers so I could easily put it on. I *slipped* into the dress like a glove and zipped it up. The dress was made up of beautiful colors such as pinks and creams. I then grabbed the corset and laced up the strings for a tighter grip on my waist. I decided to wear my pair of mauve four-inch heels that I had bought at Steve Madden. For my hair since it was still a bit damp, I decided to straighten it and hope for the best. I *accessorized* myself with a pair of cute butterfly earrings that I bought from my friend Karla's small business.

This particular dress made me feel very pretty. I felt like a princess and I was even being called all these wonderful names. There was no way a simple dress could have such an impact on me. I'm not usually the type to wear dresses but there was something about this particular dress that made me fall in love with it. All the excitement of wearing it rushed through

my veins and I was happy that the dress was helping me feel so much more comfortable in my skin.

September 5th, 2021- The edge

My boyfriend Shariful surprised me with a date on the edge. I had never been there and it was my first time being in a tourist attraction. The edge is located in 10 Hudson Yards, New York, NY 1000. The idea of this date was for the both of us to have fun and enjoy each other's company. He also added a small surprise and got us both a glass of champagne which I had never tried before. The edge was a pretty cool experience, to say the least, but it's probably not a place I'd go twice. It was memorable because of my outfit choice. I do remember having their strawberry tart and a chocolate cake which were alright not the best for overpriced desserts.

Getting up early in the morning I made my way to the bathroom. I quickly showered and made my way to my room. I had chosen my outfit the night before and I was excited to wear it. I decided to wear a white crop top I purchased from Shein. I wore a pair of Walmart men's jeans that I had found on the internet because everyone was going crazy for them. I remember *alternating* the waistband of the jeans and adding the string of a hoodie. I *buttoned* up the jeans to make it fit my waist and on top of that, I added a see-through clear heart belt I got from Sfeelinghein. I layered my white top with a flannel from Lacoste which was gifted to me by my boyfriend Shariful. I finished my outfit with a pair of platform Fila's.

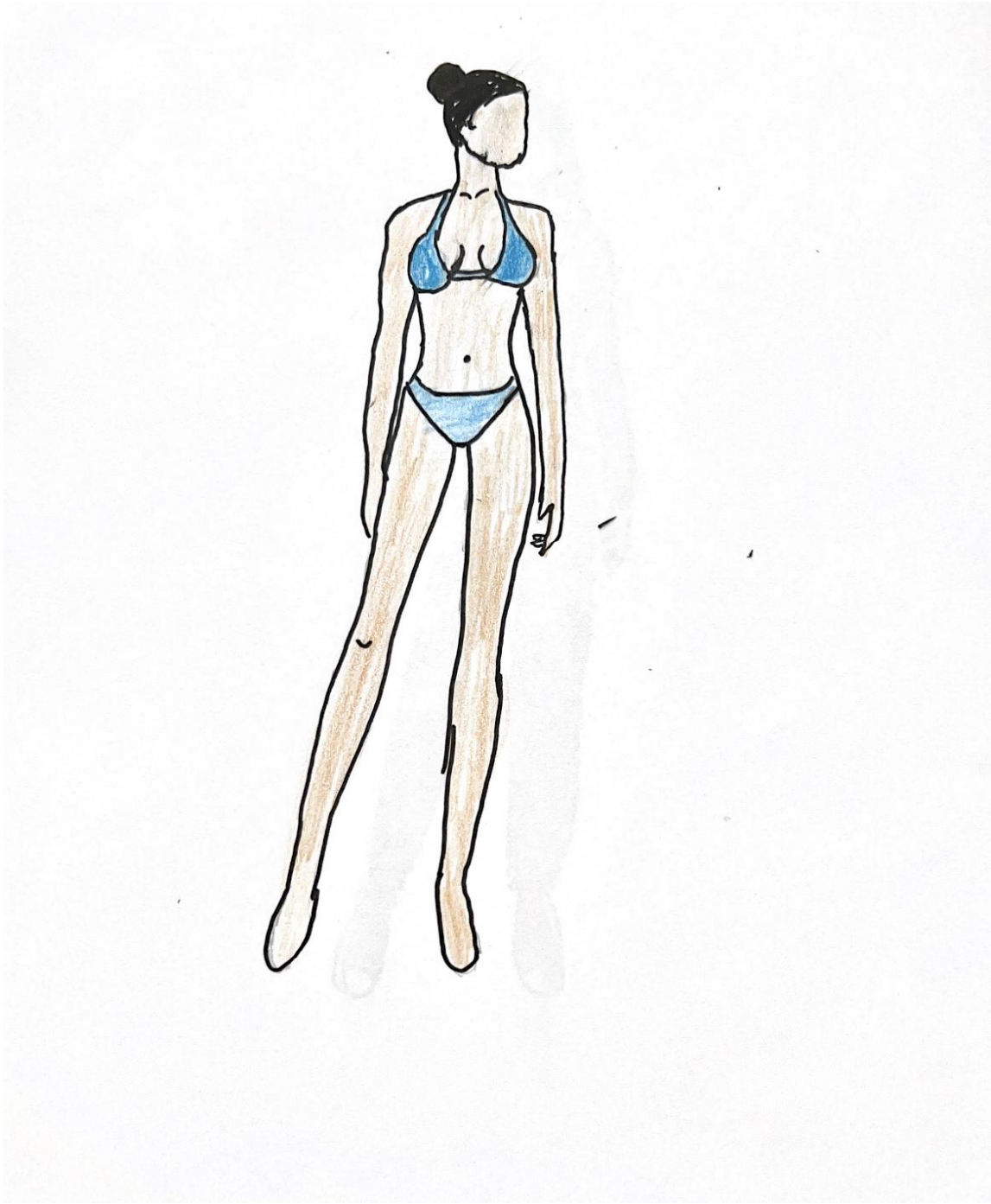
This outfit was not an outfit that I would've ever thought of wearing. It made me feel very grungy. I liked the feeling of looking edgy (I mean I was going to the edge) and cool. This outfit left an impression on me because I felt on top of the world. I felt so cool I ended up taking cute pictures that I never posted on Instagram. It was a little out of my comfort style but I would love to wear this outfit again just because I like the way it looked on me.

September 19th, 2021- Beach

The beach date was really fun. I enjoyed getting splashed by the waves and having sand in my hair for days. We ended up going to Rockaway Beach located in Queens, New York, NY United States. Shariful and his two friends Joseph and Omar decided to go to the beach one day and I tagged along. My boyfriend came to pick me up from my house and after that, we walked to the J train station on 111st. Once on the train, we headed over to Omar's house since he only lives about 3-4 stops away from my house. Once we got there Omar drove from his house to Joseph's house and from Joseph's house, we headed to the beach. Of course, it's not a beach day without a pit stop so we made our way to the nearest seven eleven and grabbed all the food we could. After the beach, we headed to Joseph's house and had some lasagna his mom made.

My outfit on that day was of course the four-piece blue bathing suit I got from Shein. I remember not showering that morning cause I knew I was bound to get dirty regardless. I got ready by putting on my bathing suit panties and then I *laced* up the bra portion with the strings that were attached. I didn't realize how difficult it was to put on bathing suits until I had to put one on myself. I then *wrapped* the skirt around my waist and tied it up. I then tied the shirt that came with the bathing suit around me and I was fully ready for the beach. I layered myself with black sweats from Missguided and an oversized hoodie I bought at Coney Island. There wasn't much to carry on my body since I was just layering to cover myself up because knowing myself I'm a bit modest when it comes to showing off my body in public.

Wearing this bathing suit made me feel beautiful. I repeat that a lot about many of the other outfits but there's something about a bathing suit that makes you feel unique. I had never worn a bathing suit before and for the first time in my life I was wearing one. I was having fun and at the same time, I was feeling like I owned my body. I had to give my body everything for being as confident and as fierce as it should have been. I spent most of my life hiding behind baggy clothes and not showing my curves. It was a good choice to make.





Author Biography

Stephanie Perez is a 21-year-old girl who enjoys spending time with her family and reading crazy stories. She's currently an undergraduate attending New York City College of Technology. She majors in Business and Technology of Fashion. She plans to get her bachelor's degree in her major as she has already achieved her associate degree. Her unique taste in clothes has helped her approach the world in a different light.