

Come party with me

Written and Illustrated by Tania McDonald

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Prologue

Do you think about why you choose the outfits that you wear? Do you think about the meaning behind each outfit? When I say think about it do you go for a certain aesthetic or do you just throw something on? In my book, I'm going to be telling you a story about what each outfit means to me. I'm going to be highlighting important celebrations in my life and why I chose the outfits that I chose. To answer my own question I believe in dressing to fit different aesthetics some days I want to dress like a Tomboy. Some days I want to dress like a conservative wife and others I want to dress scandalously. I believe that whenever you're getting dressed try to fit the character. Dressing up to me is like I'm becoming a different character. Trying to figure out my personality based on my outfits won't work. I love the element of surprise. I hope you enjoy my book about my different characters and I hope it inspires you to be yourself. You're the main character in your life. Wear that outfit if you want to. Who cares what people think? As long as you're staying true to yourself that's all that matters. Inside my book, I will be showing you the behind-the-scenes of my party outfits. I will be showing you that sometimes thinking outside of the box works out for the best sometimes. I show you where I shop and how I pair certain pieces together. If you didn't know your accessories and body modifications play a part in the whole fit. Also, that confidence starts from within and once you smell good you'll feel good. Switch up your soaps and lotions because sometimes I pick a scent based on my day or my mood. I also match the scent of my soap with my lotion. Try it and let me know how it feels.

Forward

My name is Racquel Naraysingh. I've known Tania McDonald for about 3 years now and from the first time I met her she has always been a woman of fashion. From the hair to the feet, she just always looked good even if it was just something simple. The way she puts together outfits you would think that a professional styled her. Reading this book honestly made me so happy to see how she developed into the fashionista that she is today. The book gave extremely descriptive details of the outfit and how she looked on those memorable first days. At the first high school party, when she wore a bright yellow sleeveless bodysuit with light denim ripped jeans. On the first homecoming was where she wore a long blue off-shoulder sequin dress with silver heels and paired it with silver shoes and a silver person to match. Each day also shows a description of what happened and how she was feeling that led her to pick her outfit. One of my favorite days or chapters rather, was "My first college party" because I got to experience that day with her. I showed up to the event in sweats because we just came from step practice and I didn't even know there was an event until Tania told me. Tania wore something so simple which was a black U-shaped t-shirt with the back out and just some regular black biker shorts. She literally looked so cute and that night was literally one for the books. I loved reading this book because it's just like you were getting ready with her and how she got to pick the outfit of her choice and then you only see her fashion sense get better. From her first basement party, with a white cropped t-shirt with ripped jeans shorts to the elegant green dress at the end of an annual formal party called "Milk & Honey" I know her fashion style is only going to get better.

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Chapter 1- The start of it all

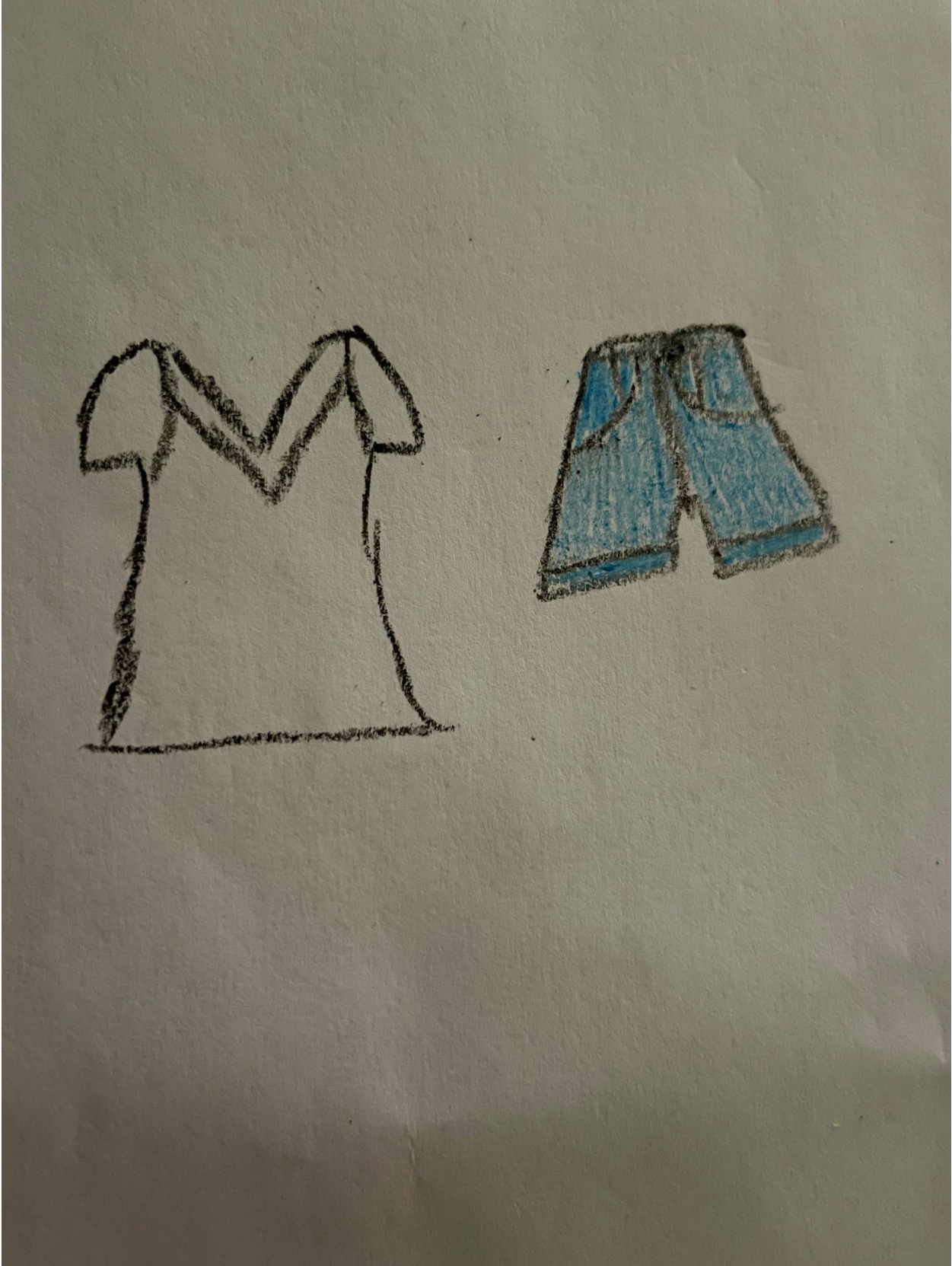
Summer 2014 is when I finally became a teenager. I was only 13 years old but once I hit that age nobody could tell me anything. Well, that's what I thought. Around this time basement parties were trending. A group of teens would come together and plan a party. The parties are usually for ages 13 to 18 and you had to show ID at the door. My friends and I had to come up with a lie to tell our parents. I told my mom that I was spending the night at my best friend's house. I was spending the night at my friend's house but I didn't tell her about the party. The party was in a basement in Flatbush Brooklyn and it was so packed. The basement was dark and had colorful LED lights flashing. The walls were dark blue and the host of the party had a snack table in the back. The table was filled with chips, cookies, and sodas. Thankfully we went and had a good time. Sorry, mom.

If I'm being honest I had no clue what to put on. I looked all over my closet until I found an old white cropped t-shirt from Burlington. Then I found some ripped jean shorts from Target. The white cropped t-shirt *wrapped* around my torso nicely. I paired the outfit with my *preshaped* black vans with white trimmings. I didn't have to do my hair because I already had long burgundy cornrows in my *head*. The week before I went to the African Hair salon that is down the block from me. When I was putting on my sneakers I had to make sure that the white laces were *inserted* into the lopes on each side of my shoe.

I was so excited about my first teenage party. I decided to take my time getting ready. I took a nice long shower. I shaved my legs and exfoliated my *skin*. Shaving the *hair* off my legs

caused my legs to feel smooth. I also used a new Dove lavender body wash because I knew that I would smell good. After my shower, I *brushed* my teeth with Crest Whitening toothpaste. I always brush my *teeth* before I leave the house because I love the feeling of clean and smooth teeth. The whitening part also helped my teeth to look white. I ended it off with my minty mouthwash which made my *breath* smell nice. Going out with good-smelling *breath* is key. I brushed my edges into shape and tied my hair down for it to stay in place. Later on, I proceeded to put on some lotion, get dressed, and sprayed lotion before I left the house.

Whenever I sit back and think about this night all I could do is laugh. The fact that at 13 years old all I wanted to do was look grown. Looking back at the ripped jeans always makes me smile. The fact that they hugged my body I thought showed my imaginary shape at the time. The simple white shirt reminded me of my older cousins going to school. I paired the outfit with my vans because the number one rule is to always wear comfortable shoes when going to a party.



Chapter 2- Sophomore year

Imagine a new student going to their first high school party. Before transferring to the Brooklyn Institute of Liberal Arts I attended Nazareth a Catholic high school. A Catholic school is different from a public school therefore I didn't know what to prepare for. This was a random Friday night and everyone was going to be there. I was only 15 years old so convincing my mother to let me go was hard. Thankfully, my aunt, Lisa convinced her to let me go. The party was on a Friday night so it started at 6 pm and ended at 9 pm. I also didn't have to worry about a ride because I knew that my friend Sarah's mom was going to take me there. I arrived at the party at 6:30 and ended up having a great time.

This party took place at the beginning of the school year towards the end of September. That being the case it was fall weather. The fact that my mom was picking me up and dropping me off I didn't wear a sweater. I wore a bright yellow sleeveless bodysuit with my light denim-washed ripped jeans. The yellow bodysuit *wrapped* and *cinched* my waist. The *pre-shaped* body suit stretched around my body nicely. I paired the outfit with my *pre-shaped* all-white Nike air force 1's. I decided to brush my hair into a top knot bun. I used gel to flatten my curls and keep my hair in place. I finished the look off by wearing gold hoops that were *inserted* into my ear lobes.

On this night I decided to wear something casual. I blow-dried my *hair*, added some gel, and brushed my hair into a high ponytail. I proceeded to slightly comb out my edges and gel them into place. I also decided to wash my *skin* with Dove-sensitive skin. Which made my *skin*

feel smooth. After coming out of the shower I began to lotion my *skin* with my Hempz lotion. I also brushed my *teeth* with the Colgate Mint flavor toothpaste. The mint in the toothpaste made my *breath* smell minty and fresh.

This garment was important to me because this was my first high school party. Every time that I see that yellow bodysuit it feels like nostalgia. I just replay that night over and over in my head. I went with a pop of color so I could stand out. One thing about me is I love ripped jeans therefore I wear them year-round. Unfortunately, I had to give those jeans to the shelter because it doesn't fit me anymore.



Chapter 3- The Halloween party

My family doesn't support celebrating Halloween. Believe it or not that didn't stop me from going out with my friends. My senior year in high school was the biggest party of the year. You had to be there. Haunted house, ice cream station, and musical performance. Despite the fact that I couldn't find a costume I had to improvise. Luckily for me, I went to a Catholic school so it wasn't so hard for me.

The older you get, the more holiday meanings change for you. Around this time Halloween meant costumes and parties. I was 16 years old and going to my very first Halloween party. I remember looking up costumes and one, in particular, stood out to me, the female clown. I begged my mother to get it for me but, once she saw the price of \$50 for a costume she immediately declined my offer. Instead, I had to improvise and find something in the house to wear.

I decided to come up with a schoolgirl costume. I found a loose-fit white button-down shirt and paired it with a black pleated mini skirt. The black mini skirt looked like it was from my old middle school. I bought some mesh black stockings from target and wore that beneath my skirt. I, later on, looked in my closet and found my black knee-high boots with broad heels. I got my *nails* done earlier in the day and did a french tip design. I lotioned my *skin* with baby oil and *unwrapped* my hair. I wore my *hair* in an all-black middle wig on my *head*. I also straightened my hair with a flat iron that altered the texture of my hair.

Until this day I still own this whole DIY costume. I love the fact that I went to catholic school because I used that skirt for multiple different outfits. This whole outfit meant something to me because I had to come up with something on short notice. The challenge was that it had to be a Halloween costume. I already wear glasses so it fits perfectly with the theme. I turned a plain schoolgirl uniform and transformed it into something edgier.



Chapter 4- Homecoming

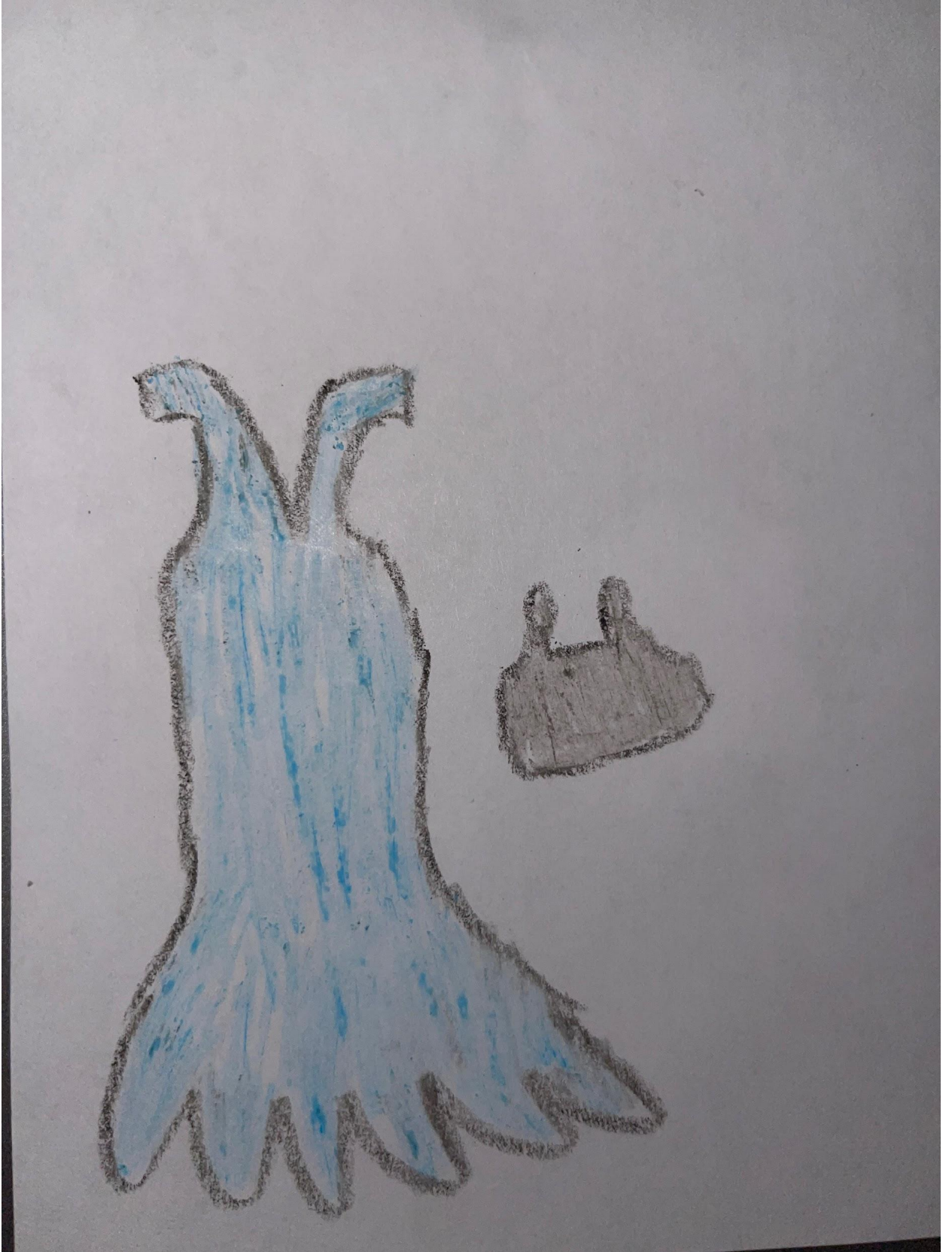
Junior year is finally here. At this point, I had multiple friends and was somewhat known around campus. Puberty hit me hard so I'm adjusting to my new body. We are in the winter season and homecoming is around the corner. This year for the first time, my school decided to have a formal dance. Earlier in the week my mother and I went to Kingz Plaza mall and found the perfect dress for me. The hardest part for women is finding the hairstyle and accessories to match the dress.

We went into almost every store in the mall and struggled to find something. Until we went into Macy's and found my dress. My outfit was a long blue off-the-shoulder sequin dress with silver heels. This was a formal maxi dress. The heels were six inches and had a strap that wrapped around my ankles. I paired the outfit with a silver purse to match the shoes. I already had my hair done therefore all I had to do was *brush* it out. My hair was in a side part bob therefore I just straightened it and added a silver flower clip.

This day was big for me. I started by *brushing* my teeth and looking for the fragrance of the night. My mother also surprised me and booked me a *makeup* appointment. After my makeup appointment, I ran home and got dressed. After I was fully dressed I knew that once everyone saw me they would be surprised. This was the first time that I have ever dressed up in school.

I still have this long blue off-the-shoulder sequin dress in my closet. Whenever I look at this dress I think about my "break free moment". I relate my dress to breaking free because this

was the first time that I looked at myself and felt 100% beautiful. I remember looking in the mirror and seeing everything put together and I didn't recognize myself. This night ended up showing me how beautiful I am.



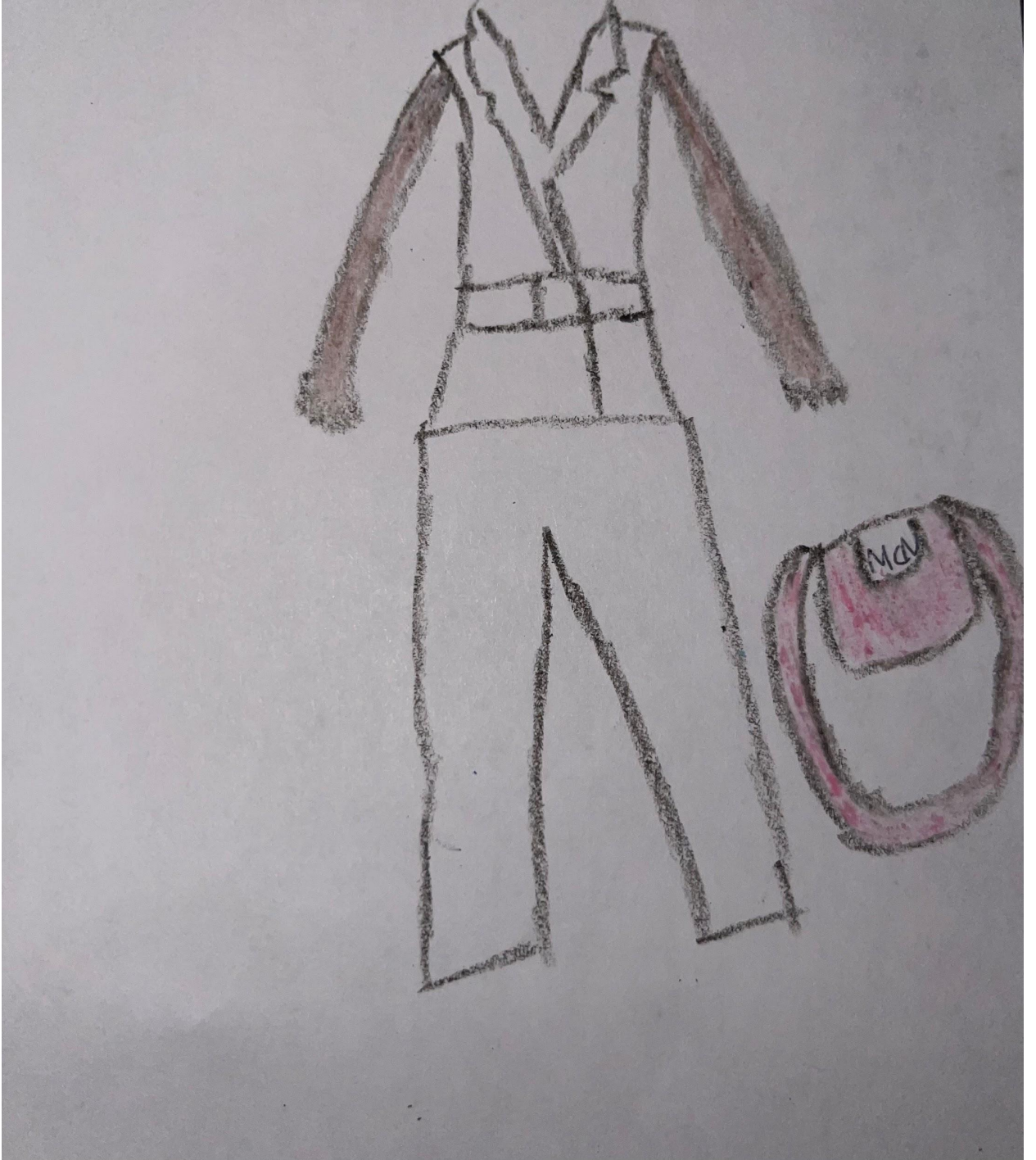
Chapter 5- My cousin Norma's College Graduation

In 2017, I was about 16 years old, and my cousin Norma was graduating college with her bachelor's degree. I was so excited for the road trip at the University at Albany to watch her walk across that stage. The road trip was literally filled with ongoing traffic and greenery. Albany is way different from NYC everything seems to be slow-paced. This was my first time visiting her college. My whole family drove down to support my mother Marsha, grandma Monica, uncle Tom and myself. We all dressed in semi-formal attire for her college graduation. Once we reached the school I remember glancing at that big auditorium and looking at over 1,000 seats filled with graduates. Looking around I saw more seats filled with families and friends celebrating their graduates. Once the ceremony began I saw flashing lights and heard the room filled with joy.

For my cousins' graduation, I decided to try something different and wore an all-white v-neck pants suit. The white pants suit came with a silver belt to match that *wrapped* around my waist. The silver belt had a pearl centerpiece that has to be *clipped* to the front of the suit. This pants suit was a wide-leg suit. The pants suit was a cap sleeve therefore I had to throw my pink blazer on top whenever the auditorium got too cold. I paired the outfit with my bright Fushia pink MCM crossbody bag that needed to be *inserted* through the loop in the front. I borrowed my mother's *pre-shaped* nude open-toe 6-inch heels that needed to be *clipped* onto the back of my ankle.

For my cousin Norma's graduation I had to prepare days in advance. I went to the hair salon to *wash* and *straightened* my hair. I wanted my *hair* to appear longer so I decided to add 26 inches of extensions to my hair. I also went to my favorite nail salon in Brooklyn and got my *nails* done. I kept it calm and went with french tip coffin shape acrylics. This time I did my nails short. I don't know why I decided to do all of those errands the day before we drove up there. The morning of the graduation all I did was take a shower and moisturize my *skin* with Hempt lotion. I also topped it up with my Bath & Body Works perfume, I went with my cherry blossom scent.

This was a memorable time for me because I watched my cousin accomplish a huge goal. This dress reminds me of the first time I styled myself. I have never been to a graduation before therefore I looked up outfit inspirations on Pinterest. I think about how I didn't know much about fashion at the time. On the other hand, I didn't let that stop me. I also think about the subtle gold stud earrings and nude shoes that I paired with the outfit.



Chapter 6- My first college party

Let's take it back to the summer of 2019. I started college in August 2019 and was invited to my first college party during my first week of classes. I attended New York City College of Technology, CUNY and honestly I didn't think that this college had parties. To my surprise, the party was going to be kept in the Namm Building lunch room. On that Friday night, I stayed in school until the party started because I got out of my last class around 4:30 pm. The party started around 6 pm and ended at 10 pm. I chilled with my step team called AAO on the third floor before the party started. My team and I walked into the dark lunchroom and everyone was dressed casually. There wasn't a big change to the lunchroom only a DJ, some flashing LED lights, and colorful balloons scattered all over the place. The student government committee also had a table filled with snacks and that was about it.

Remember this is my first college party ever. I didn't know what I wanted to put on and I didn't want to wear anything from my closet. I asked my mother if she could take me to Kingz Plaza Mall that Thursday and found a simple cute outfit in Forever 21. I spotted a black U shape t-shirt with the back out. The back of the shirt came with straps that I *wrapped* around my stomach to cinch my waist. I wanted to create some curves. The bottom piece came with knee-length biker shorts. The downside was the shirt was backless I couldn't wear a bra with it. I decided to *adhere to* some tape and keep everything in place. On my feet, I decided to go with my cream color Yeezy sneakers and my black tote bag from Zara.

The benefit of this party is the first week of college my hair was already done. My *hair* was already freshly done in some honey-blonde cornrows. I mixed the honey-blonde extensions with my *hair* and my mom added 6 cornrow braids going down to my waist. On the morning of

the party, all I did was add olive oil edge control to my edges and *brushed* my baby hairs into place. After brushing my edges into place, I added Nairobi Wrap it hair foam to the top of my braids to add some shine to my braids. When I was finished I proceeded to *wrap* my hair in a silk scarf and took a shower. In the shower, I rushed to shave the hair off of my *skin*. I proceeded to wash with my shea butter body wash and exfoliated my *skin*. After I came out of the shower I *brushed* my teeth and used mouthwash. This time I used my whitening and mint mouthwash because I wanted my *breath* to smell fresh.

On this Friday night, my teammates and I bonded for the first time. Anytime I look back in my phone gallery that one group picture from that night pops up. I remember my teammates and I had a dance circle in the middle of the party. I remember my friend Donje spilling his Pepsi soda on my outfit because he tripped over a wire on the floor. I still wear that outfit almost every summer after that. On the other hand, I can't help but believe that my first college party brought my step team closer.



Chapter 7- My Grandmother's 60th birthday party

In spring 2021 the world was somewhat starting to open back before covid. My family didn't waste any time and booked a venue for my grandmother's 60th birthday. My mother ordered an event planner and everything. This was my grandmother's surprise birthday party. My mother booked a venue at Glen Terrace in Mill Basin Brooklyn. Once we walked into Glen Terrace the gold ambiance grabbed our attention. The gold glass spiral stairs on the right-hand side lead us to our venue. The event planner had 5 tables decorated with black decor and red roses on top. The wall was filled with pictures of my grandmother and the rest of my family. The main wall had huge led lights that spelled out "Laleane" my grandmother's name. Next to her name were red and black balloons surrounding it. The floor was mirrored glass so anytime you looked down you would spot yourself. We also had a live DJ playing reggae and soca tunes the whole night. The ambiance was just beautiful and brought my family closer together.

The dress that I wore was a black long-sleeved, sequin formal dress with a slit in the front. The front slit was on the left-hand side and showed some leg action. The dress came with a silk belt that *wrapped* around the waist to cinch it in. I also wore shapewear under my dress to add a *pre-shaped* notion that I had curves. I paired my dress with a yellow clutch purse that *clipped* towards the front. On my feet, I decided to go with my black ankle-strapped heels from Aldo.

This is my grandmother's 60th surprise birthday party. The dress code was semi-formal or formal attire only. On the morning of her party, I went to get my hair and nails done. I tried something new and went with a top knot bun with bangs in the front. My hair stylist *washed* my hair and blow-dried it. She had to blow dry my hair because the heat could straighten my hair

perfectly and keep everything in place. She began to add some styling foam and *wrapped* my *hair* into a ponytail. After the ponytail, she added *clips* to hold the bun in place and I was done. I decided to paint my *nails* and toes white no acrylic this time. I also got my makeup professionally done. I wanted my makeup done because I was going for a mature look and wanted to add something different to my face. I added lash extensions to make my eyes appear to be brighter and lip gloss to add some shine to my face.

This lovely black sequin dress brings me back to a very special moment from that night. My family and I came together for a positive moment. We are used to coming together for mainly funerals. I reminisce about watching my grandmother smile as she walked into her birthday surprise. Watching her dance with all of her grandchildren including me. Thinking about all of the family pictures that I added to my photo album that's what that dress means to me.



Chapter 8- Milk & Honey

Milk & Honey is an annual formal party that takes place twice a year in New York City. Milk & Honey is usually celebrated by Caribbeans and is a place for us to pull out our best couture looks. This year the party took place at the Brooklyn Museum. The party was on a rooftop filled with pastel colors, a lot of greenery, and a huge stage for performers. There were about 25 personal tables and 0 chairs. The party provided bottle service and free food inside the museum. The weather was sunny outside and there were multiple photo areas. The party was also filled with photographers and videographers ready to capture every moment.

In my opinion, my dress was the main statement piece to my outfit. I bought my dress from a small boutique on Flatbush Ave. Once I spotted this dress I knew it was for me. I wore an aquamarine green off-the-shoulder mini tulle dress. This was a mini dress and I wore pearl accessories with it. I wore pearl earrings that *clipped* to my ears. I also bought a clear belt that *wrapped* around my waist and had a pearl square clip in the center. I paired the outfit with my clear *strapped* heels and my gold blinged clutch purse to match.

For Milk & Honey, you have to dress classy and couture. I already had my outfit it was time for me to add body modifications to match. Earlier in the day, I went to the barbershop and cut my *hair* into a caesar cut with no designs. When I went home my mom dyed my hair blonde for me. I was trying to go for a platinum blonde but instead, I got an orange or blonde color and went with it. I also added makeup to my *face* with dramatic wispy lashes and green eyeliner on my water line. The pop of green under my eyes matched perfectly with my dress. After taking my shower and shaving my legs. For my *skin*, I added my Tom Ford Shimmering Body Oil to add shine to my body. I also moisturized my body with baby oil to add some extra shine. I

finished the look off with a little bit of my Jimmy Choo Blossom perfume. Something about adding that citrus, and sweat pea mix that makes me feel like a lady.

Every time that I look at those pictures I remember how I felt in that dress. Usually, when going out I'm drawn to wearing black. This time I went with a bright color, green. I never wear green. The fact that I wore a green tulle dress and dyed my hair blonde. All eyes were on me. During Milk & Honey everywhere I turned someone complimented me. Something about that dress feels like a breakthrough moment for me. I stepped outside of my comfort zone and felt the most confident.



Chapter 9- My 20th Birthday.

This is the year 2021 and I'm leaving my teens behind and entering real adulthood. My birthday is April 12 therefore I started saving my money in January. This year I didn't want my mom Marsha to handle anything. This point, I've been working since I was 18 and I wanted to try funding my whole birthday experience. This year my birthday celebration took place in an Air BnB. I decided to book an Air Bnb in bed Stuy Brooklyn. I booked the apartment for two nights. The apartment was a simple two-bedroom basement with one bathroom. The walls were white and the ceilings were low. The bathroom was made out of grey marble on the wall and had a crystal white sink. The living room was simple one big brown couch and a 50-inch tv mounted on the wall.

This year I wanted to look over the top I decided to purchase a pink draped collar backless floor-length mermaid dress from Fashion nova. The dress was a fuchsia pink and was *reshaped* to hug my waist. The pink dress had to be *attached* by the zipper in the back and I had to climb into the dress. I paired the dress with a Steve Madden tan 6-inch stiletto heel that *clipped* around my ankle. My accessories involved a gold snub that was *inserted* into the ear hole on my earlobes. I purchased a tan purse to match the shoes from Aldo. This was a purse that needed to be *clipped* in the middle of the front of the purse.

When it comes to my hair I went to my friend Jada's house in Jamaica Queens and she did my hair for a discounted price of \$30. I bought a wig from Jada and she *reshaped* the wig to fit my *head*. The night before she dyed the black and added bleach to change the color of the *hair*. Instead of a jet black wig, she added the blond highlights around the wig and *attached* the wig to my head with Got2b glue on the tip of my hairline. After she placed the wig on my head

she began to straighten the Brazilian 26-inch wig and the heat from that caused the hair to become bone straight. After my hair, I placed makeup on top of the *skin* on my face. This caused my face to look more polished and Birthday ready. The day before my birthday I got my *nails* done in Downtown Brooklyn and did a French tip with silver stones on my ring finger.

Looking back at my 20th birthday celebration all I could remember is all of my friends explaining how much they love me. My friends Sarah, Malik, Jada and more came with a big surprise. While I was in the bathroom getting dressed with my friend Ulyssa they placed 20 different gifts on the couch. Some of my gifts included AirPods, a pink popcorn purse, and many more. Looking back on my fuchsia pink dress reminds me of all of the hard work that I had to do to fund my get-together by myself.



Chapter 10: My mom's 45th birthday ball

My mother Marsha decided to throw a 45th birthday ball at the end of October. With that being said it was cold outside and I wanted something that was extra and kept me warm. Besides my dress, let's talk about the inside of the ballroom itself. My mom also had her birthday ball at Glen Terrace in Mill Basin Brooklyn. The ball had mirrored glass stairways with gold trimmings on the railing on the left and right sides of the building to enter the different venues. My mothers' venue was filled with red balloons all over the ceiling. The floor had a mirroring effect as well and on the right side of the venue placed a long dark wood table. On the table placed a white, red, and gold colored bouquet of flowers. The walls of the venue were also mirrored. The table was filled with different foods: macaroni pie, stew chicken, curry goat, and more. My family came with their gifts and dressed in their ball attire. The room was filled with *pre-shaped* suits for the men and dresses that *wrapped* around the waists of the women.

I bought my gold long-sleeved turtleneck mermaid dress from Macy's on 34th street. The gold dress came with a gold satin scarf that *wrapped* around my waist. The satin wrap gave me that hourglass shape. On the gold satin wrap, there was a silver circle made of pearls *attached* to the center of it. My clutch was white with a gold Micheal Kors symbol *clipped* to the right side of the clutch. My heels were black and *wrapped* around my ankle all the way up to my knees.

Before going to the ball I brushed my *teeth* with Colgate whitening toothpaste. The whitening effect in the toothpaste also helped me get fresh *breath*. After brushing my teeth I ran into the shower and used my oatmeal and shea butter soap bar. Using that soap made my *skin* so soft and smooth. Once I came out of the shower I lotioned my *skin* with Hempz and it gave my skin a subtle glow. I had a caesar cut on my *hair*. Therefore all I had to do was brush the waves on my hair to the front of my *head*. After brushing my hair down I *wrapped* my *head* with a satin

scarf while I was getting dressed. Before leaving the house to attend the party I sprayed my Burberry “Her” perfume all over my *skin* and dress. The jasmine, amber, and slight musk in my perfume caused me to smell so good.

Anytime that I think about my gold dress I remember my family’s reaction when I walked into the venue. I remember my mother’s face when she realized that I was trying to match her. I think about me struggling to clip the dress in the back and having to suck in my stomach. I think about all the smile that was on my mother’s face and seeing her happy to celebrate a day all about her.



Chapter 11- Jamaica Independence Day party

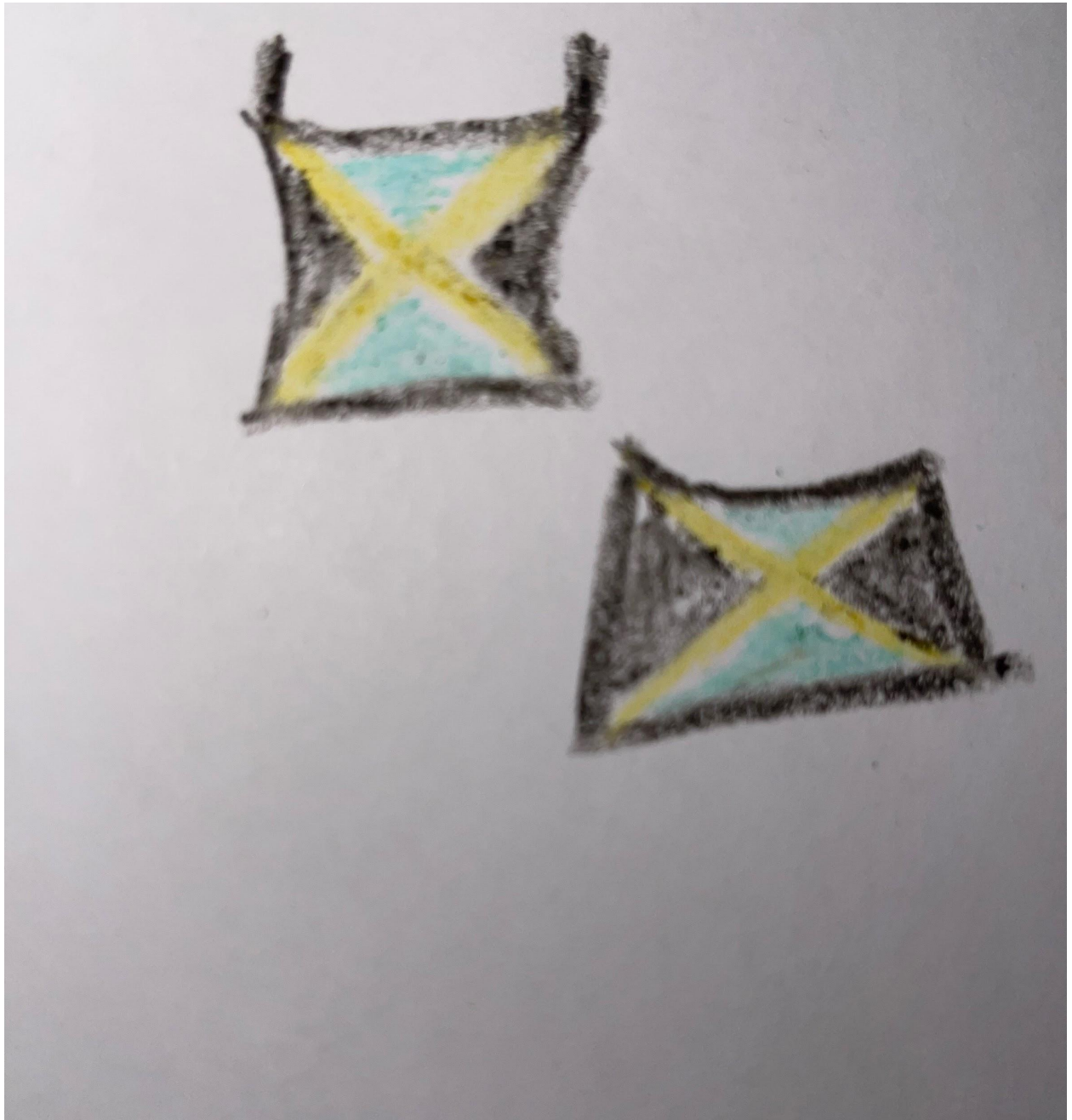
Let's take it back to Jamaica's Independence day August 6, 2021. As a fellow Jamaican myself this is the day that we come together and celebrate Jamaica. This year we decided to go to something called Jerk Fest. All we had to do was order tickets online and go to Roy Wilkins park in Queens. The park was filled with a bunch of people of different shapes, sizes, and races. There were multiple food trucks and food stands selling jerk chicken. As we kept walking through the park I remember seeing a huge stage and a crowd of people. On the stage, it was the Jamaican artist Konshens singing and dancing. I usually go to Jerk fest almost every year but, this year I went with my cousin Stephanie and my auntie Stacy.

As a proud Jamaican, I wanted to wear something that was going to make a statement at Jerk Fest. I went searching all over for an outfit. I searched Amazon, fashion nova, and even Shein. Until I decided to look up the hashtag "Jamaican Outfits" and found a girl in Ohio that made crochet outfits. This was back in June and I decided to order a crochet outfit and requested for it to be done with the Jamaican flag colors. After about two weeks I got my package and my crop top and skirt set came out perfectly. When I was trying on my outfit I realized that the back of the crop top had to be *clipped* to stay in place. This outfit was also handmade *by other* person and is very fragile. I also realized that the skirt had to be tightened by the crochet needle being *inserted* into the fabric. My crop top was a little too big so I had to *adhere* some booby tape to hold everything in place. I paired my outfit with a black crossbody purse that *clipped* in the front. On my feet, I work in *pre-shaped* vans that were comfortable and easy to move around in.

Before going out I had to get ready for Jerk fest. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my hair. So literally the night before I bleached my *hair* blond with changed the texture and color of my hair. I have a low cut so all I had to do was brush my waves down which flattened the

curls and *wrapped* my headtie on my *head* for the remainder of my getting ready process. For my *nails*, I already went to my girl Apple on Church Ave and went with an all-black acrylic set. I didn't want my nails too long so I asked her to cut my *nails* down and do a square shape set. For my *skin*, I used Dr. Bronner's lavender soap and my Hempz ginger-scented lotion. Before leaving the house I brushed my *teeth* with Colgate whitening toothpaste. I finished it off with some Colgate Listerine to make my *breath* smell minty and fresh.

To this day I am still obsessed with my custom Jamaican crochet outfit. Every time that I think about it I can't forget the number of compliments that I received wearing it. I also love the fact that this is a unique piece that I could wear again for Labor day or when I visit Jamaica. I think about seeing Konshens perform on stage for the first time. I also remember stuffing my face with jerk chicken and trying to pick which one is the best.



Chapter 12- My 21st birthday

My 21st birthday was definitely a month to remember. Yes, I said month because I celebrated my birthday on multiple days. Today I'm going to focus on my real birthday and going out to dinner with my two best friends Jada and Ulyssa. We decided to go to this 5-star restaurant in Manhattan called Sei Less. The lights in the restaurant were dimmed and each table had its own lamps above them. The table had Colgate white tablecloths and gold plating. The spoon, fork, plate, and even the water cup were gold. My best friends and I decided to order orange chicken, garlic shrimp, and vegetable fried rice. The serving size was so big that we all shared. For drinks, we went with Casamigos lemon drops.

My dress was something out of my comfort zone. I went on my favorite website Fashion Nova and looked for a dress that would make my melanin pop. I went with a colorful sequin mini dress with a halter top in the front. The halter part was *attached* to the colorful skirt. The back of the dress had to be *clipped* by two buttons around my neck. In order for me to button my dress I had to make sure that the button was *inserted* into the loop. My dress was already colorful with pink, blue, yellow, and green so I wanted my bag to be simple. I paired my dress with a black sequin clutch that was *clipped* in the front by one button. My shoes were the basic clear 6-inch heel that needed to be *wrapped* around my ankle and *inserted* into the belt buckle.

This is my 21st birthday, therefore, I had to go all out. I decided to place a wig on my *head*. Remember I have short hair so the only *hair* that we needed to worry about was my bundles. I went to my friend Markeebea's hair salon in Bed Stuy Brooklyn. She water-colored my 26-inch wig which changed the color of my *hair* from brown to jet black. She then proceeded to place the wig on my head after she *reshaped* it to fit my head perfectly. After placing the wig on my head she straightened the Peruvian hair which changed the texture of the hair from body

wave to bone straight. After my hair appointment, I ran to my makeup appointment and went for a classic beat. My makeup artist Gigi put the makeup on the *skin* on my face and blended everything out so perfectly. I went with dramatic lashes to brighten my eyes and added a nude lip. The day before my birthday I got my *nails* done by my girl Apple and went with a long chrome acrylic set. This time I went with the coffin nail shape and did a blue and pink chrome set.

Every time that I think about my 21st birthday outfit I think about the heartbreak that I was going through around that time period. I remember telling my best friends Jada and Ulyssa that I had to look good. All I cared about around that time period was looking good and making my ex regret hurting me. I also remember taking pictures of the famous red steps in the restaurant and seeing the rapper J.I Prince in the restaurant. My 21st birthday was intimate and filled with love from my best friends. I wouldn't want to celebrate my birthday any other way.



About the Author

My name is Tania McDonald and I am a senior at New York City College of Technology, CUNY. I am working towards my Bachelor of Business and Technology of Fashion. I am 21 years old and I love to dress up. I look at planning my outfits as an art piece. I believe in the saying “When you look good you’ll feel good”. For fun, I love to style my friends and family. I am your go-to person whenever you need help looking for an outfit. My favorite colors are blue and purple. I also love all genres of music. Oh yeah, and I cut all of my hair off. I want to use my degree to work at a marketing company and become a celebrity stylist.

