

Different Shades of Being - Part 2

For Halima Abdi

By TheSpiralledEye

So his first class as the sexy, mature MILF teacher hadn't exactly gone to plan, but that was fine. Kayden was determined to get his money's worth out of this experiment; that machine had cost him a pretty penny and he intended to enjoy his oldest sexual fantasy to the utmost; rough start or not.

Feeling buoyed by his meeting with Manuel, Kayden headed to his next lecture; undoing another button on his shirt to let a little extra cleavage show. It was time to be on the other side of the fence of his favourite fantasy now; it was time to seduce a co-ed. He watched as the student filed in and immediately zeroed in on the perfect target; a young man who looked surprisingly like himself back in college. He looked like exactly the sort of person who would be interested in his teacher, one glance at his grades in the year previous on her laptop showed he could probably use the boost to his grades as well.

He set about giving his lecture, making sure to lean suggestively against the desk once in a while to show off his long, dark legs. He leaned over the desk, letting his heavy breasts fall downwards, accentuating his cleavage and making brief yet meaningful eye contact with the man in the front row. It was hard not to grin as he noticed the red blush slowly spreading across the man's cheekbones. Oh, he would make that man do so much more than blush soon enough.

As the lecture came to an end the others began to file out and Kayden timed his next move perfectly. Under the guise of tidying up his papers he swept several of them onto the floor and sighed.

"Oh dear, could one of you give me a hand with this? How about...you, Mr. Jonas I believe?"

The young man turned bright pink.

"M-Me?"

"Yes, help your professor out, won't you?"

"O-okay."

Kayden turned his back to the man, letting a wicked grin spread across his face; this was it! He bent over at the hip, presenting his bum into the air and letting it stretch his skirt to the breaking point. He could only imagine how much Jonas was staring, he would be putty in his hands within seconds...

Then Kayden turned, ready to put on his best, husky voice and step closer to the man he intended to seduce but instead he froze. Jonas was standing there, papers in hand, cheeks aflame looking positively conflicted. Kayden could see the lust shining in the man's eyes but also his nervousness, his indecision; he could practically hear the gears turning in his head. Wondering if putting the moves on his teacher was the right idea.

Kayden also noticed something else. Jonas was young, an adult to be sure, closer to his mid twenties than early according to the student file. But his face still had a bit of baby fat, his stammer showed how inexperienced he was with love and sex. He...he was just a kid. Closer to Saanvi's age; his own daughter's age than his own.

All the thrill suddenly left him as though his desire had been doused with cold water.

"Thank you , young man." He cleared his throat, "You may go."

Jonas stammered a bit more and did just that, looking more than a little confused. Kayden felt oddly disgusted with himself. He'd always loved this fantasy! Yes, he was now a bit older but he and Jonas were still consenting adults! So why did he feel so...gross about it?

Kayden pouted, unconsciously rebuttoning the low top to cover his breasts more. He had waited so long for this and now he'd ruined it in a second by what? Thinking about his daughter? His very fake daughter who was actually his mate, who was probably off having the time of his life right now living the sexy co-ed dream. With a sigh of frustration he grabbed his bags and headed down to his office; he had term papers to organise.

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Henry skipped the rest of his classes; it wasn't as if he actually needed to attend anyway. This was all a fantasy he'd just gone for the sake of giving the illusion a bit more reality. It definitely didn't have anything to do with those snickering women and their comments. After all, it would be ridiculous to feel like crying over insults that weren't even really about him. Saanvi was just a game, he couldn't have his feelings hurt over something so stupid.

Instead he enjoyed the thrill of skipping class, of talking with others who were doing the same and gaining an invite to a house party not far from campus that very night. It was the perfect opportunity to get things back on track. He had never attended wild college parties in his real life, too busy, now he could get the full experience; drinking, making out

with strangers, maybe even a bit of sex in a stranger's bedroom. It would more than make up for everything that had happened today.

He'd run home immediately and began digging through Saanvi's cupboard for something to wear. Henry wasn't sure whether or not to be thankful Kayden was still at the campus, probably inviting some student into his office or something. At least one of them was doing this properly.

Again he found himself frustrated by the lack of more traditional Indian clothing; why couldn't Saanvi be a bit more...stereotypical? Still he managed to find a few pieces and pull them together into something acceptable.

He found a bright red crop top, patterned with embroidery and zari embellishments that called attention to his smooth midriff and ample chest. A golden maxi skirt, while a bit more conservative than he would have liked, did give off the illusion of a more traditional outfit and paired with some gold jewellery he looked like all those pictures he'd had commissioned in secret of his Indian fantasy girl. Modern, but sexy and revealing.

"Hello." He drawled, trying to add a hint of an accent to his voice, "My name's Saanvi."

A small glow of hope began in his chest; perhaps he could salvage this fantasy after all.

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Henry stood outside the door of the bustling fraternity house, his heart pounding with a mixture of nerves and excitement. This was the wild college party of his dreams, and he was determined to let loose and have an unforgettable night of sexual delight. Adjusting the vibrant Indian-inspired outfit he had carefully chosen, he took a deep breath and stepped inside, the heat and pulsating music instantly enveloping him.

The air inside the house was electric, charged with the energy of the partygoers. Henry felt a rush as she weaved through the crowd, her eyes widening at the sight of his peers already completely drunk to the point of falling over. Laughter and animated conversations filled the room, blending with the thumping beats of the music. It was a sensory overload, and he couldn't help but smile. It was everything he wanted.

Without hesitation he picked up a red plastic cup and filled it to the brim with punch, downing it quickly and feeling the spiked liquid burn at his throat. Somebody cheered and he turned to see several frat boys hooting at him, yelling 'chug! chug! chug!'. With a wry smile he refilled the cup and began drinking once more, letting the slightly sticky liquid dribble down his chin and onto his cleavage much to the co-ed's delight.

The alcohol made his head spin and Henry felt his inhibition slowly melting away as he sashayed his way through the crowd. Letting his hips and rump jiggle slightly and enjoying the eyes that ducked down to admire his form. With a newfound confidence, she decided to join the dancing throng, letting the music guide her movements. There was no dedicated dance area, people seemed to just start whenever they wanted. Henry wiggled his hips suggestively, letting his breasts brush up against men 'accidentally' and giving small giggles of apology.

Lost in the rhythm, he began to really focus on just how good his body felt. He caught glimpses of his dark skin and eyes as he twirled past various surfaces and grinned at his appearance.

“Hey girl, putting on quite the show ain’t you?”

Henry turned and found a tall man with white blonde hair grinned down at him; he was a foot taller than Henry, with enough muscles to make a bull jealous. His smile was charming, yet his eyes seemed predatory. A small warning bell went off in the back of Henry’s mind, one he had never felt before and could not explain but managed to ignore. This was just the situation he had been hoping for...right?

“Yeah, I love to dance.” Henry smiled, “What about you?”

“Oh, dancing is fine but I could think of other things we could do together with our bodies.” He leaned in close and Henry realised he was backed up against the wall, this tower of a man on the other side effectively pinning him in place.

That bell began to ring louder.

“Why don't we get a drink first?” He suggested slightly nervously, “Chat?”

“Chat?” The man scoffed, “C’mon girl, no need to be coy, I know your type.”

“My...type?” Henry’s heart was starting to beat faster now but not with excitement or anticipation as he expected.

“Look at you,” The man smiled, “I bet you come from one of those super strict Indian families who would be scandalised to know what their daughter was doing. You want somebody to show you a good time, well, here I am.”

That is exactly what he had been doing but all of a sudden the idea didn't seem like much fun anymore. In fact, the place was starting to feel stifling.

"Actually, I think I need to go. Nice meeting you." He tried to slip past but the man grabbed his hand and rolled his eyes with a playful smile.

"Come on, I know you want to play hard to get but that is so old."

"I'm not playing!" Henry yelled, the accent he'd forced into his voice completely gone, several people turned to look at them and the man glanced around with irritation.

"Fine." he scoffed, letting go. "Bloody tease."

Henry turned and fled; heat was burning behind his eyes again. This was all so wrong, he was supposed to enjoy being the slutty, repressed Indian girl finally breaking loose, so why wasn't it any fun? Blinking back tears he headed home, trying very hard not to think of what would have happened had he stayed at the party.

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Kayden paced, he kept looking at the clock on the wall. 9:30...9:47...10:23...where the hell was he? It was getting late. Just as Kayden was considering calling somebody, the sound of a key in the lock made his ears prick and in walked Henry, looking dejected as hell.

"Where the hell have you been, young lady? I have been worried sick!"

The words were out of his mouth before he could stop them and Kayden realised they were right. His chest had been a tight bundle of motherly concern when he'd returned home to find Saanvi gone. Not to mention when she wasn't home by dinner time. He had occupied himself by cooking; something he normally hated but found oddly satisfying in this reality.

A cold bowl of laksa sat next to his empty one on the kitchen table and he was suddenly filled with irritation.

"I made dinner but of course now it's spoiled." He crossed his arms over his chest, "You could have called! I was worried."

Saanvi looked at him for a moment and sighed.

“Sorry...I’m not up for this right now.”

“Not up for this?” Kayden cried, “Not up for explaining to your mother where the hell you’ve been and dressed like that!”

“Kayden, can we just stop the role play for a second?”

Kayden felt his heart clench. Role play. Yes, of course that’s what Henry thought he was doing. He felt his cheeks turn pink in embarrassment realising just how caught up in this fantasy he’d gotten. Saanvi wasn’t actually his daughter, she didn’t exist, he didn’t exist, this was all just a fun game. So much fun. He was having such a great time right now.

“Sorry, things haven’t been going great.” Henry sighed, “Sorry you made dinner and all that, we’ll recommit tomorrow but right now I just want to go to sleep.”

“Yeah...sure.” Kayden laughed awkwardly, “I-I don’t even like Indian food it was just a thing, y’know, a bit of fun...”

Henry nodded and brushed past and Kayden suddenly felt himself filled with the compulsion to hug his friend. He seemed so sad, clearly something had happened and it was bothering him. They had never been the emotion type before; their whole friendship was basically trading porn and transformation stories, nothing deep. Yet Kayden suddenly wanted to sit Henry down and get him to spill the beans about today, maybe comfort him a little.

He quashed such feelings, like the cooking and the worry it was clearly him just getting too caught up in this reality. Nothing serious. He threw out the spoiled laksa and went to bed, intending to use his sexy, exotic voice to tease himself to orgasm but instead just rolled over and went to sleep.

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“Wow, your English is so good! I don’t hear an accent.”

Henry sighed. It was the third such comment he had received this week and it was starting to wear thin. The first time he’d tried to come up with some clever response, even trying to add a bit of accent in but it had felt wrong.

“Probably because I grew up here.” He replied instead, “Full blooded American.”

“Oh.”

Henry watched with resignation as the interest in her classmates' eyes dimmed. She was no longer interesting now; just another face in the crowd, all exoticism and mysticism brought on by her appearance dashed. It brought him an odd sense of satisfaction. He had spent the last few days growing more and more disillusioned with this little fantasy and yet...he had no desire to leave. Each morning he would get up and put himself in a sexy outfit, try to get turned on like he had that first time but it had stopped working.

This body was sexy, he knew that from an objective point of view but he simply could not make himself attracted to it. It just seemed so...vapid. Getting turned on by himself. He'd tossed all the more traditional Indian clothes in the back of the cupboard and started a new experiment.

Blue jeans and shirts, the plainest he could find and yet people kept staring at his chest, even when he put on a turtleneck. It didn't matter how he dressed, people would stare at his body and while at first it had been fun it was starting to feel a little...creepy. Especially from the older professors.

“You've got a really pretty name though, Saanvi. That's way nicer than Jack.” The man grinned and Henry felt his heart flutter a little.

“Thank you.” She smiled tightly.

There was an odd feeling in his chest; a desire to...be desired. Yet at the same time he didn't want people looking at his chest or skin. The very things he himself had loved so much only days earlier.

“Me and some of the guys from class are getting together to go over that case study for our mock article. Did you want to join?” Jack offered after a moment.

“That would be great!”

Anything to end this awkward as hell conversation. The journalism assignment had been hanging over his head as well so it was two birds with one stone. He would never admit it to Kayden, but he was actually getting invested in his studies as Saanvi; in a way he never had

back in his real life. The journalism course was fascinating and he was loving just doing normal campus things like going to the library and now, a study group.

He hurriedly gathered his books and notes, following the smiling Jack through the buildings toward one of the empty study halls. Now that they had gotten over the initial awkwardness of his opening comments Henry was finding him quite charming. His eyes seemed to sparkle in a way that drew him in and reminded him why he was here in the first place. A bit of college student sex might even be on the table. Once that happened all these confusing feelings about journalism and his appearance were sure to disappear.

As they entered the room, he found herself amidst a small group of students, huddled around a table strewn with textbooks and laptops. He gave them a friendly wave and they pulled out a seat for her to join. The sense of belonging felt oddly warm, even if one or two of the girls were giving him the stink eye for some reason.

As the study session began, Henry couldn't help but notice the woman seated across from him. She introduced herself as Maya, and as she started to speak about the assignment Henry found himself caught up in the melody of her voice. Maya's presence was captivating, her every word carrying a sense of confidence and knowledge that totally captured him.

Throughout the study group, Henry found his attention drifting more and more towards Maya. Yet it wasn't just physical either. Yes she was beautiful, with her red hair and dusting of freckles but it was more than that. He marvelled at the way Maya effortlessly grasped complex concepts, her eyes sparkling with enthusiasm.

As the hours passed, and Henry found himself getting flustered. His attention for Maya slowly transformed into something more. He noticed her heart fluttering whenever Maya laughed at a joke or brushed a strand of hair behind her ear.

Caught off guard by these newfound feelings, Henry struggled to process them. He was a guy so obviously feeling attracted to a girl was fine, so why did it feel so...different, compared to normal. Not to mention the similar feelings he felt for Jack in the hall on the way over here. Had he just been repressing his feelings the last few days and now they were bursting through the cracks? It didn't feel like it, but he had no other explanation.

As he slowly began walking home Henry came to realise there was something strange happening; why was he so attached to this life, this fake reality? He wondered if Kayden was feeling it too? He'd never felt so conflicted. Because even now as he walked along, hearing his small heels click against the pavement he felt like Saanvi and that felt *right*.

Kayden stared down at the stack of papers with a sigh. This class was really going to struggle come the midterm. It was a wonder half of them were even taking college level English when they couldn't even format an essay correctly. Especially poor Jonas, how he'd managed to write a thousand words on *The Great Gatsby* while spelling the main character's name wrong every time was beyond him.

He stuck his tongue out in concentration, carefully writing comments in the margins in red ink. A knock at the door made him start; office hours weren't for another three hours. Then again, if Jonas couldn't spell *Gatsby* he probably couldn't read his office schedule.

"Come in."

A warm smile appeared as Manuel stepped inside, two coffee's in hand.

"I didn't see you in the lunchroom." he said warmly, "I thought you might have gotten caught up here again."

"Manuel you're a doll." He sighed, taking the coffee and breathing deeply, feeling his chest rise and fall.

"You sure do take this marking seriously." Manuel said, sounding impressed as he took a seat across the desk. "First assignments don't get handed back for at least a week in my classes."

"Oh I wanted to give them all a second read through, just to be sure. That means starting early."

"I admire your dedication."

"My...yeah."

Kayden swallowed. He was dedicated to this marking, wasn't he? In fact, now that he thought about it, he'd not done much besides mark, cook and teach the last few days. He'd been here almost a week and his sexual fantasy was yet to include any actual sex. He found himself blushing with embarrassment.

"Are you alright?" Manuel's brow furrowed, "You're going red."

“Fine, fine.” Kayden insisted, “Just the coffee heating the blood.”

He had to focus; why was he wasting time on these reports anyway? It wasn't like he really had to do them. His idea to seduce a student had been a bust but maybe what he needed was another woman, one closer to his own age. Yes, that was it, a bit of professor on professor action; that would do it.

“Why don't we get out of this stuffy office?” He suggested, “Head over to the faculty lounge.”

“Good idea, you look like you need a break.”

They walked together, Manuel chatting about his adjustment to the campus and classes and Kayden easily falling into lock step with him. He found the man surprisingly easy to chat to and their conversation flowed naturally. So much so that he was shocked when they seemed to have crossed the campus in no time. As they stepped into the faculty lounge Kayden was delighted to see it packed full thanks to lunch time.

He scanned the crowd, going over his options for female professors and finding...nothing. All the women were lovely, some more homey than others but all attractive and yet he felt nothing. No warmth in his loins, no thrill of lust. Not even when the university basketball coach walked in wearing the skimpiest shorts he had ever seen with her athletic build on show for all to see. Odd.

“Makes you jealous, huh?” Manuel teased, “But I suppose when it's your job to train so many kids up to that level you can't help but get an athletic build.”

“Oh yeah.” Kayden giggled, “She's quite the uh...she looks nice.”

Hot. He'd meant to say hot but the word had died on his tongue. Clearly he had been staring a little too obviously because a second later the woman was before him, holding out a slightly sweaty hand in greeting.

“Hey, sorry I don't get to talk to you intellectual types up here much.” She grinned, “Analise, you're Sori, the English professor, right?”

“Soraya.” Kayden corrected.

“Oh, sorry!” Analise smiled awkwardly, “I’m awful with names. Your accent is beautiful by the way-oh crap, am I allowed to say that? Was that rude?”

“No it’s fine I...like my accent too.”

His sexy, Indian accent. The one that had brought him such joy just a few days ago...the accent he had totally forgotten about in the previous days. How was that? Manuel cleared his throat awkwardly and Analise practically jumped out of her skin, obviously she hadn’t even noticed him.

They continued to chat and Kayden noticed the way the athletic woman’s eyes kept looking over him. There was a shine in her eyes that he knew all too well. Knowing Analise was attracted to him should have been exciting; the hot sports teacher and the mature intellectual teacher secretly getting together in a lesbian relationship? It was a story that practically wrote itself.

Yet when Analise walked away Kayden’s mind dismissed her almost instantly, not even bothering to watch her taut ass as it wiggled into the distance.

“I uh...didn’t realise you were gay.” Manuel said slightly awkwardly, “Analise seems like a nice woman though.”

“I’m not gay.” Kayden replied quickly, somehow knowing it was true, “She is nice but...I don’t think I am interested in women at all.”

“Oh well that’s good! I mean, no, not good as if being gay is bad just that I am glad you’re not...uh, let me start this sentence again.”

Kayden giggled as Manuel continued to fumble over his words. She watched the red slowly sinking into his cheeks and found herself smiling and for the first time found her body begin to tingle with those first bursts of attraction.

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Kayden put down the plates of dhaal and flatbread, taking his seat at the dinner table and watching as Henry’s mouth twisted.

“What are we doing?”

“Eating...dinner?” Kayden replied, slightly confused.

“No I mean, we spent all that time saving for the machine so we could realise our sexual fantasies as exotic women and what have we actually done? Have you slept with anybody yet, cause I haven’t.”

Kayden felt himself deflate.

“You’re cooking and writing essays, I’m studying. What the actual hell are we playing at? Every time I try to do something sexy it just feels...weird.” Henry sighed in frustration.

Kayden thought for a moment, once again feeling stupid for having enjoyed cooking dinner so much when it wasn't necessary.

“I think it’s just this whole fantasy feels super real.” He said after a moment, “What we should do is remind ourselves why we are here, to be trashy women and get ravaged by people.”

Even as he said it the words felt off; a little voice in the back of his mind reprimanded him for speaking to his daughter like that.

“How about a shopping trip?” He suggested, “We can go buy clothes, put on makeup, maybe hit the town after?”

Henry brightened, “Yeah, that could be exactly what we need.”

A little burst of excitement formed in Kayden’s chest; he forced himself to believe it was for the sexual thrill of trying on women’s clothes, not because he was excited to go shopping with his daughter.

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The pair stood in front of The Diamond, the most glamorous shopping centre in the city. There were well over a hundred shops here carrying everything from bargain basement clothes to chic, one of a kind couture gowns. Surely a spending spree here would be just what they needed to kick start this sexual fantasy back into gear!

They made straight for the All in One, a shop so large it almost took up half the ground floor and had a good selection of items for them to try.

“Alright, let’s split up and surprise each other with a sexy outfit.” Henry suggested.

“Good idea, I’ll head for makeup first, most of the stuff in the house is really conservative, I want to try something a bit bolder.” Kayden said, “Maybe it will make me bold too.”

They gave one another a nod and parted ways. Henry headed straight for the women’s section and began to browse through the shelves, waiting for something to catch his eye. He looked down at his chest; the thing that had been causing him so much pleasure and grief lately. He stood before the mirror, looking at the boring shirt he had on and how it stretched thanks to the hugeness of his tits. Maybe he went a bit overboard with them.

Still, he turned from side to side, admiring how he looked. Not sexually but in a more self reflective way. He did like this body, it made him feel attractive and powerful and there was a part of him that wanted to show it off. Not in a sexual or voyeuristic way but rather for the sake of being proud of his own appearance.

He had spent the first few days dressing for attention, then for the opposite. Henry felt a new sense of determination fill him now; he was going to dress for *himself*. He looked through the outfits, finding something unquestionably American. A white singlet top that showed off his tits without being obscene and a short mini skirt with the American flag printed across the right back pocket.

It seemed oddly familiar and then he remembered Maya, the girl from the study group. She had worn this exact skirt. Somehow knowing that made him want it all the more.

He took them both to the change room and took his time stripping down and putting them on. Enjoying how the rougher material of the mini skirt held his ass cheeks together. He posed in front of the mirror and felt a confident smile break across his face.

Nobody would think twice about his lack of accent wearing this! He stood in front of the mirror with pride, loving how his dark skin contrasted against the white of his top and blue of the jeans. He looked like an all American girl; exactly what he wanted right now. He looked hot, ready to hit the beach or town.

Henry remembered the first day here and nodded to himself, now or never it was time to reignite the spark. He slipped a hand beneath the waistband of the skirt, trying to focus on his own reflection. He ogled his own breasts, tried to make his face flush and hot just the way he liked it as his hand pressed into his panties.

Nothing.

He felt nothing; well, a little embarrassment but no sexual thrill that's for sure. Getting off to his own reflection was just...weird.

"Come on, Henry." He hissed at himself, "Look at that hot exotic...fuck I can;t do this."

Even describing his reflection as exotic felt wrong. He wasn;t exotic he was just...Saanvi. A normal woman who happened to be Indian, just like millions of others. Despite this being his fetish for the longest time he was having a hard time remembering why exactly the idea of an accent and some darker skin had made him so hot before.

His eyes fell on the skirt and how had hand was positioned inside in and all of a sudden a vision filled his mind. Of his hand in another version of this skirt, the one worn by Maya. Wetness seeped against his panties and Henry felt his face getting warm.

Somehow it felt wrong to imagine but now that he'd started he found he couldn't stop. He closed his eyes, slowly pressing his fingers against his pussy through his underwear. He imagined cornering Maya one day after class and dragging her into an empty classroom. What would it feel like to have her pussy brushing against his own? Would she moan? What would that sound like.

"Mmm..." He shivered, pulling the wet fabric aside to slip a finger against his wet clit.

Maybe he could invite Jack to join them, she could be sandwiched between them, Jack's cock slowly sliding in and out of her while Maya played with her tits.

"Ohhhhh...Oooooohhhh!"

His finger swirled around his clit now, eyes squeezed tightly closed as the pleasure began to grow. His mind was a mess, he imagined Jack's strong hands on his body, thrusting into him and then a moment later it was Maya, her womanly lips suckling on his tits. Both of them made him equally turned on. If only they were both here right now! Fuck!

This felt so wrong and that only added to his ecstasy; he felt like his fantasy was somehow dirty and wrong and it made him so wet. Imagining Maya's pussy was the one he was touching was what finally sent him tumbling over the edge. He came with a silent shudder, biting down on his lip to stop any sounds escaping and alerting the other shoppings outside to what he was doing.

Shakily he removed his hand and cleaned himself off. He was probably obligated to buy these clothes now he realised sheepishly. She somewhat awkwardly removed the tags

and handed them to the saleswoman at the desk before paying and setting off to try and find Kayden.

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Kayden headed straight for the makeup tables, grabbing a bright red tube of lipstick and smearing it over the back of his hands to check the colour. It was bold, sexy and...not his hue. Trying not to get disheartened he picked up another, fluro pink and scoffed at how immature it would make him look. He needed something sexy but all the obvious choices didn;t seem to work, perhaps a more muted mature colour could be alright with the right accessories? Maybe he should try to find Henry, he might have some insight.

“Hey check this out!”

He turned, there was Saan-*Henry*, He was posing in a jean miniskirt, a tiny American flag decal pasted to the back pocket right across his ass. It was the sort of thing he would have teased the man about when they first arrived; Kayden would have given him the thumbs up and told him to find a matching pair of panties so that if he fell over he could show off that hot butt. What escaped his mouth now however though;

“You can't buy that. It's far too revealing.”

Henry gaped at him and Kayden felt himself still with shock; had he seriously just told Henry his outfit was too revealing? He looked back and all he could see was his daughter, dressed up like a prized lamb and a wave of protectiveness washed over him that he could not deny no matter how hard he tried.

Then to his shock, Henry pouted, stamping his foot down and crossing his arms under his ample chest.

“Mom, this is what everybody wears nowerdays. There is a girl in my study group, Maya, she has this exact skirt.” Henry's cheeks turned pink at the mention of Maya.

His maternal instincts took over once more before he could stop them.

“It's not right, showing so much leg,” He insisted, switching into Hindi out of habit.
“You can be...sexy, without being so...revealing.”

He grabbed a long skirt, flowy, with an embroidery pattern that almost looked desi.

“How about this?”

“I already have a skirt like that and...I don't like it much anymore.” Henry said in English with a shug, “Well, how about this?”

He reached over and held up a mini dress; it was black, silver rings held the sides together, it was little more than two pieces of tight fabric held together with a few rings of metal.

“Absolutely not.”

“Ugh, you're no fun to shop with.” Henry threw down the dress in annoyance.

“Can't we speak Hindi?” Kayden asked, “People are starting to stare at us.”

They were; people loved family drama, especially when it aired out in the open. Kayden could see people deliberately slowing as they walked through the shop, eyes sliding over to the quarrel between mother and daughter.

“I want to talk in English.” Henry responded with a pout, there was an odd sense of determination in his eyes; what an odd hill to die on.

“Stop being a brat, you're acting like a spoiled teenager.” Kayden scolded, picking up a muted shade of plum lipstick and smiling as he tested the colour; this one for sure.

“Well you're acting like my mother.”

“I am your mother, young lady and you will show me some respect.”

The words had escaped before he could stop them and both former men froze in place. Kayden wordlessly put the lipstick back and readjusted himself before whispering quietly enough that only Henry could hear.

“I think we need to go home...”

“Yeah, I think you're right, this is getting a bit out of hand.” He swallowed.

The two walked back to the car, their shopping trip abandoned. They drove back to the house without another word to one another, both too caught up in their conflicting emotions. There was clearly a lot they needed to talk about, to figure out; but right now neither had the strength.