

better on the rack than off the rack

Dress to look your best, but first learn what is best for you. Step outside of yourself and regard your reflection as a stranger you are meeting for the first time.

—JANE DERBY

When I reflect on the importance of fashion in my life, I am apt to recall Ralph Waldo Emerson's observation, "The sense of being perfectly well-dressed gives a feeling of inner tranquillity which religion is powerless to bestow." If the world of D/s is where you wish to reside, or at least visit, then fashion must be your calling card. From the stern black leather pants of a dominant to the frilly lace of a submissive maid, choosing the correct clothing helps create a visual statement about your sexuality.

Clothing adds to your environment in the same way the right props complement a theatrical production, or the perfect wine can turn a commonplace dinner into something memorable. Imagine a scenario where a sadistic dominant is dressed in madras shorts, a Bub's BBQ T-shirt, black socks, and sneakers while the submissive is turned out in a Demask bustier and a pair of Manolo Blahnik shoes—suddenly it's clear how attire can backfire.

In most of our daily lives, circumstance dictates what we wear. We put on microfiber to go to the gym, a suit to go to the office, and shorts and a polo shirt for a Sunday afternoon picnic. But late at night, when the lights go down and the beeswax candles are lit, it is time for clothing that announces our mood, availability, or preference.