

# SKIN DEEP

By Gloria Majule

*Skin Deep was written for the 2023 Ripped Festival at American Blues Theater*

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**Representation:**

**Theater:**

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS:**

**COFFEE**, a dark skinned black African woman, 20s

**CARAMEL**, a light skinned mixed black woman, 20s

**SETTING:**

Take your pick, this shit is universal

**TIME:**

April 2023

**Headline Ripped: Disney's casting of 'Lilo & Stitch' character prompts colorism debate**

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/disneys-casting-lilo-stitch-character-prompts-colorism-debate-rcna79735>

So I was on twitter again-

**COFFEE**

Oh no.

**CARAMEL**

I mostly go to look for funny videos  
but every now and then  
I stumble upon shit that outrages me-

**COFFEE**

What was it this time?

**CARAMEL**

Lilo and Stitch.

**COFFEE**

The cartoon?

**CARAMEL**

Yeah.  
They cast a biracial light skinned actor as Nani  
in the live action adaptation.  
Disney did us dirty again.

**COFFEE**

Again?

**CARAMEL**

Yeah. Like when they cast a biracial light  
skinned actor as Jasmine in the live action of  
Aladdin?

**COFFEE**

But you got Ariel right?

**CARAMEL**

Kinda.

**COFFEE**

What do you mean kinda?

**CARAMEL**

**COFFEE**

She's not dark skinned dark skinned.

**CARAMEL**

She's not?!?  
I disagree.

**COFFEE**

Like she's not light skinned light skinned.  
But she's also not dark skinned dark skinned.  
Like, in Tanzania she'd be considered light skinned.  
Like, you would find her face on  
a billboard, you wouldn't find mine.  
Except maybe on a billboard  
advertising bleaching cream.

**CARAMEL**

Okay fine but-  
Getting Ariel, doesn't it balance out  
who they cast as Nani?

**COFFEE**

No because Ariel is a mermaid –  
her race wasn't relevant to the story.  
Nani in Lilo and Stitch;  
She's dark skinned  
she has Afrocentric features-

**CARAMEL**

I didn't think of Nani's features as  
Afrocentric – she's a Pacific Islander-

**COFFEE**

Pacific Islanders can have Afrocentric features  
Listen, I'm just tired.  
I'm just tired of seeing whitewashed  
BIPOC stories.  
Like, come on.  
It's as if we're saying:  
here's representation for you BUT  
You gotta pass the paper bag test.

**CARAMEL**

So you want every minority on every show

to be dark skinned dark skinned?

**COFFEE**

No, I'm just tired of seeing lighter skinned people  
With their lighter skinned privilege  
Whitewashing stories.  
It's too much.  
I'm not saying lighter skinned people  
Should never get cast in anything,  
But it is a problem when they are  
Constantly getting cast INSTEAD  
Of darker skinned people.

**CARAMEL**

You don't think it's a talent thing?

**COFFEE**

Girl, are you for real?

**CARAMEL**

Yes!

**COFFEE**

Of course it's not a fucking talent thing.  
The fuck are you talking about.  
It's a society thing.  
There's a rot in society that  
Means that if you have lighter skin,  
You get to be called pretty-  
You get to be a star.  
If you don't,  
You gotta wait in the back of the line.

**CARAMEL**

You got Ariel!  
She's not lightskinned!

**COFFEE**

She is not the lightest skinned light skin,  
But she's light skinned!  
Also one kinda right doesn't undo all the wrongs.  
You don't get it.

I get it –  
I'm black too.

**CARAMEL**

You are acceptable black.  
You are "ideal" black.  
"Poster child" black.

**COFFEE**

Because I'm mixed?

**CARAMEL**

YES.  
It makes a difference because  
Whitewashing is a thing.  
Colorism is a thing.  
Texturism is a thing.  
Featurism is a thing.  
And for all those reasons I am very disappointed  
In the casting of Nani in Lilo and Stitch.

**COFFEE**

I'm sorry.

**CARAMEL**

Yeah.

**COFFEE**

Can I ask something and don't get mad, okay?

**CARAMEL**

I'm gonna get mad amn't I?

**COFFEE**

Maybe.

**CARAMEL**

Just ask.

**COFFEE**

Do you think I'm prettier than you?

**CARAMEL**

**COFFEE**

...That's a fair question.  
And, I don't know.  
I think society has told me you are.  
I think sometimes I believe it.  
Because when you look at billboards  
And movies  
And TV shows  
And music videos  
And magazines -  
Your features still get applauded  
And take front page  
Way more often than mine.  
I'm jealous of you sometimes I won't lie.

**CARAMEL**

Well, I think you're gorgeous.

**COFFEE**

Thank you, I think so too!  
Even though growing up  
I was constantly told  
not to stay out in the  
sun too long to avoid getting  
any "uglier".  
I remember I would rub lemons  
On my face because they're  
Supposed to lighten your skin

**CARAMEL**

Really?  
Did it work?

**COFFEE**

Of course not!  
It just stung like hell  
And I'd smell like fucking lemonade.

**CARAMEL**

Not the worst smell?

**COFFEE**

Not at all, I fuck with citrusy perfumes.

**CARMEL**

Though I guess society is starting to be more outspoken about the colorism thing? Hence the outrage on twitter?

**COFFEE**

Yes yes but is it really so fucking terrible to want a Disney princess that's not whitewashed?

**CARMEL**

Shuri in Black Panther.

**COFFEE**

Okay. Other than in Black Panther.

**CARMEL**

Tiana in Princess and the Frog.

**COFFEE**

She was a frog for most of the movie! Because of course she was.

**CARMEL**

Oh right, I forgot about that. Here's what I will say: Beauty is only skin deep.

**COFFEE**

You've never been called ugly And it shows.

**CARMEL**

No, I haven't ...I'm sorry.

**COFFEE**

Don't apologize Jesus. At least you're not like those people Who make themselves look Darker on their magazine covers Trying to pass for minority Groups when they're

White whitey white.  
It makes me so angry you know?  
It's like, being a minority  
is appealing when you are  
in all respects a minority  
But you're still kinda white looking  
So you get to play both cards  
And monetize that?!

**CARAMEL**

You're talking about the job?

**COFFEE**

Stop.  
You were qualified!

**CARAMEL**

But you were more qualified.

**COFFEE**

We were equally qualified.  
You just.  
You looked the part.  
Black but not too black it's scary.

**CARAMEL**

I'm sorry.

**COFFEE**

Stop apologizing.  
I'll find another job.

**CARAMEL**

...  
So are you boycotting the live  
Action Lilo and Stitch like you  
Boycotted Aladdin?

**COFFEE**

Ugh.  
I haven't decided yet.  
But it's not like me boycotting  
is gonna change anything.  
At the end of the day,

They'll still make their paper.  
And we do need to see more  
Pacific Islander representation.

**CARAMEL**

You're not boycotting Little Mermaid  
Are you?

**COFFEE**

What?!  
No fuck that.  
I'm watching Little Mermaid.  
Are you kidding me?  
I'm not that bitter!  
Still.  
I wish we we'd stop taking one tiny step forward  
And then ten steps back.  
I need to get off twitter.

**CARAMEL**

You always say that.

**COFFEE**

This time I'm serious.

**The End**