



## NEVER IMAGINED

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## CHAPTER ONE

### *Dara*

Added to being fat, stressed, overworked and never been loved by a man I wasn't related to, let's take a moment to respectfully add foolish.

My recent lovelessness was due to a certain hunk of a guy I'd hoped would be my forever. I mean, I was just getting used to being carried to bed despite my weight, then he went and scammed me of three hundred and fifty thousand naira, my 'supposed' life's savings.

I wasn't entirely foolish – I lied about my savings which were in millions actually. However, Bartholomew ran with the three fifty thousand that was supposed to help with his house rent. I'd not had the time to confirm since I was always working and he ran knowing this was all my money.

How could anyone do that to a person? If he knew he was swindling me, why didn't he remain some of the money for me? Like, what if the three fifty thousand was actually my life's savings, so, I'd be left broke right now? How, the hell, did I think he would be mine, forever?

The fool even dropped a note apologizing for taking off with my money – to another state, he wrote. Instead of being hurt, I'm left wondering how that money would be enough for him to settle at another state. I mean, you and I know moving to a new house is one thing, but to another state is a whole ball game.

No, I wasn't crazy for thinking this way, I was just drunk.



I've had about three bottles of stout. That shit is bitter and I have a sweet tooth, but I heard the bitter things help in losing weight, right?

One would think this thought meant I was a conscious healthy eater, nope, nothing like that. I was that woman that imagined she's losing weight while adding green pepper in her noodles because the minced meat finished without her knowledge.

I'd have preferred a mixed fruit juice but we all know juices don't numb the mind. I was so freaking tired of struggling through relationship after relationship with never a happy ending. Moreover, my work is difficult, so tonight, I needed a break.

My mom and sister are convinced if I could just lose a bit of weight, I'd find the right person. And I've tried, truly. There's was a time I registered at the gym, I think I still have about four months left of the one year subscription I'd paid, but my work was a boar that never gave me leeway to make the gym; let's stick with this excuse.

God, I didn't want to think about my weight now, being drunk and depressed would be a terrible combination. My head was already feeling woozy but I was not done yet.

"Bartholomew," I tested pronouncing the arsehole's name and didn't slur, so, I had perhaps two more bottles to get me to that perfectly sloshed state, then I'd call a Bolt ride to take me home.

"Hey, can I get a table?" a gravelly voice I would recognise even in my dream, pierced the steady noisy hum in the bar and my thoughts, and my head snapped up to confirm that he was the one.

Oh no, Lawrence Ekpo.



Do not wonder why I'm despairing, I'll tell you. You see, I work at Pearl Advertising as Managing Director while he worked at Gem Advertising as MD too. Pearl and Gem are sister companies under the Ekpo Conglomerate.

Yes, you guessed right, we are sworn enemies – not like the bloodletting kinds but close. You see, the owner of Ekpo Conglomerate thought it would be funny to have two ad companies, one managed by a woman and the other, a man, with healthy competition.

The emphasis was on 'healthy' but hey, when people want to win and look good for the boss, there's no healthy to it. For the past three point five years, Lawrence Ekpo and I have been at loggerheads to get the best portfolios and present the highest profit margin every end of the year.

We could have been on talking terms but the first time we met, Lawrence had stared at my extended hand for a shake as though it was a venom-spitting snake.

I had no idea why he'd reacted that way, especially as we'd just been named MDs at the board meeting. If not for my secretary who'd dragged me away, I'd have been left standing there, dumbfounded. She later told me Lawrence was nephew to the owner of our companies and had just returned from abroad.

It didn't explain why he'd acted like I was dirt but I understood – privileged children and all that jazz. Perhaps, he thought I didn't deserve to get the MD seat because I didn't attend Harvard Business School, but that wasn't my business (pun intended). I'd worked like a camel to get that position and I was still working to prove I deserved it.



But it got worse when Helen, my secretary, told me he was dating my nemesis, Clara James, head of marketing for Pearl Advertising, daughter of another wealthy man (because you know, the rich only schmooze with the rich) and self-made witch on my case.

I swear, I have no idea what I did to her but I guess it still boiled down to a lack of Harvard Business Certification on my CV or owning a wealthy daddy plus an inheritance stashed somewhere.

Nevertheless, that's not the only reason I'm despairing when he appeared at this bar that isn't even exclusive for rich people. Caz Bar was full today and if he needed a table, they might likely show him to mine. Because unlike everyone else hanging with friends, I had my table with three extra seats to myself.

Can we forget that apart about recognising his voice in my dream? Yes, that one, thank you.

Anyway, I'm sure he'd rather walk out than share a table with me. This got me sighing in relief but then I choked on a swallow of my drink when my table darkened and his voice came at me like a warm fog.

“Hey,” he didn't ask permission to join my table, he just pulled the plastic seat and curved his beautiful length into it. The effrontery; of course, who could call him out on it when he likely could buy this place with cash from his back pocket.

“Shoot me now and let this day end,” I muttered and slurped my bitter drink from the tumbler, grimacing at the taste.

“What?” I could feel his frown as he leaned in to peer at me, “Miss Umoh, what are you doing here?” his gaze took in the empty bottles and widened. “Bad day?”



It must be the drink, perhaps I'm drunker than I thought because, I could swear he sounded concerned. However, I regretted opening my mouth because he would not have recognised me at first and I could have slipped away without having to say a word to him.

Yeah-yeah, who am I deceiving? The moment I stood, he'd definitely recognise the wide hips and arse I am known for, the one he'd commented snarkily about, once or twice, to his buddies who laughed when I passed by.

"It just got worse," I raised an eyebrow at him and he sighed heavily and rubbed a hand over his dark, narrow face, his fingers momentarily tangling in his impeccable black and luxurious beard, one I might have itched to feel, once or twice.

"Can we not do this here, please? We are out of the office, we can drop arms now," he sounded like I felt - fed-up.

Nevertheless, I must be on a roll, because, though I wasn't a troublesome person and avoided it at all cost, I had this malicious need to kick him while he was, metaphorically, down.

"Forgive me, I wasn't informed of that rule," I sneered and gulped from the bottle directly, forgetting that I had a perfectly good tumbler in front of me.



## CHAPTER TWO

### *Law*

I stifled a groan at her talk about an unknown rule; there were no rules to our competition.

Damn it!

Of all the people I could meet in this off the path bar. I'd specifically chosen it so I'd not meet anyone I knew. It had to be her.

See, every man has a kind of woman, a spec. Even if he were to be a monk, sworn off women and physical intimacy or even faithfully married, that kind of woman will remain his temptation and weakness. So, ladies and gentlemen, may I present Idara Umoh, fondly called Dara, my damn kryptonite.

However, she will never know that.

She thinks I'm cold with her because we are both MDs and are always at each other's necks to get the best end of year profit report; far from it.

I'm ambitious, no doubt, and she's given me a good fight so far. Gem won the first year, Pearl took the second. Last year, she almost took the bacon but Clara James made a few manoeuvres (I didn't ask her to, but then she was being a good girlfriend), so, Gem got it.

There was no chance to reject the manoeuvre though, because Clara told me after the final board meeting of the year. Additionally, it didn't hurt to win because it boasted my ambition to take over from Uncle Jerome Ekpo, owner of Ekpo Conglomerate.





You see, my good uncle didn't have a son and his daughters had made it clear they were fine just being board members, so, I had a shot at it. I believe that's why he'd called me up to return and run Gem, he probably wanted to see how I'd do.

So, I left the United States and returned to Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria with the determination to be the best and get that Chairman seat on the board. Except, when I got here, during the welcome party I'd not ask for, Uncle Jerome had hinted about a merger that would be good for us and then had introduced me to Clara. You guessed it, daughter of the man who owned the company for the prospective merger.

It wasn't a problem. Like I said, I am ambitious, and being with a spoilt daddy's girl, the kind I was used to anyway, seeing as I also had a privileged upbringing, was a small sacrifice to make.

The problem was, sacrifices were exactly that because they included difficult choices. And the difficult choice came the first day I walked into the complex that housed both Pearl and Gem Advertising.

She was standing right there, waiting for the lift and I might as well have walked into an invisible wall. My legs wouldn't move and my mouth dropped. Jesus, I'd suffered a cease of breath just like I was now staring at her as she sucked from that bottle.

Fuck.

I looked away because, damn it, I was imagining her sucking on a part of my body that was currently straining my pants.

This was why I'd looked away and tried stifling a groan. Yet, I couldn't look away for long, my gaze found her again and I'm immediately



concerned and want to know why she's drinking so much. She didn't even seem to like it.

"I'd never have thought you were a stout person or even an alcohol drinker," I threw it out there casually while taking a drag from my bottle of lager.

"God forbid you think anything about me, seeing as I'm dirt and all," she shrugged and then bit her lip as though regretting what she'd just said.

"What the fuck?" I sputtered, some of the drink dribbling from my mouth. I wiped my mouth with the back of my hand while frowning at her. What did she mean?

She looked startled at my reaction and then started packing her purse and phone as though to leave.

I stood, hovering over her and she stilled her movements, eyes widened. "What did you mean by that?" how could she think of herself in such degrading manner? Did she know how many times images of her smile had helped me go through sex with Clara? That would be every damn time. She had no idea the prepping I had to go through before I entered any meeting she would be present just so I didn't fumble or stare at her like a lost puppy.

"Umm...nothi..."

"Don't you dare say nothing," I growled and it gladdened my heart that she bristled and frowned at my tone even though her movements were slow, she was obviously tipsy.



“What the hell is your problem? You’ve known me for more than three years and not exchanged more than mono-syllables with me or throwing words at me across a boardroom table as though we were in a land dispute!”

I have to bit my lip to keep from smiling. Damn it, she was so beautiful. Even her anger made me want to lean down and kiss her pouty lips. I take a deep breath to pull back my emotions, which were dangerously close to the fore.

Groaning, I sat down, “I’m sorry...please, don’t go.”

“Uh?”

I deserved that, but it made me smile, “I said, please, don’t go.”

“I heard you. I just don’t know why you want me to stay. I thought we were enemies.”

“We aren’t enemies, Dara,” I swallowed.

“I could have sworn we were with the way you’ve treated me,” she sighed and leaned back, she was weary and it was more than the present conversation.

If only she knew, I avoided her because I like her too much.

I cleared my throat, “So, why are you trying to get drunk?”

Dara blew out air, looked at me as though considering whether to tell me or not. Believe me, my heart is hammering with hope that she chose to tell me.

I saw a small shrug when she decided, “I got scammed of my life’s savings.”



“What the fuck?! Who do I have to kill?”

Her eyes and mouth widened at my reaction. Shit, I might have given myself away.

I cleared my throat, “I mean, how could you let that happen? Wait, for real, your life’s savings? How much?” my heart is burning with rage while I plotted ways to help her. Maybe, loan her money with no return plan.

“Umm...three hundred and fifty thousand naira,” she croaked, still looking stunned.

I frowned, “That’s your life’s savings?” impossible, not when we were earning the same amount with additional allowances. Unless, she had a serious gambling problem.

“That’s what I told him.”

“Him?” my muscled tightened as though ready to throw a punch. If I knew the ‘him’ she was referring to, I’d bloody his face. Not exactly for the fraud, but, for daring to even look at her.

Don’t get me wrong. I knew she probably had a boyfriend or something. However, as far as I wasn’t seeing or hearing about it, everything was dandy in my head. She was mine even though she wasn’t. Moreover, every time during the end of year party that she turned up without a date, I breathed a sigh of relief. Selfish, I know.

Had she been hiding this man from me? God, I sound like a psychopath. She had no idea I liked her.

She took another deep breath and nodded, “I thought it was leading to marriage for sure. I mean, the guy carried me to bed.”



Fuck.

I do not want to imagine her in bed with another man. Yet, he must be a buff guy to be able to carry her. I, on the other hand, am tall and lean muscled. I have a hard body complete with ripped abs though I don't think I'm strong enough to lift her up the stairs of my house. However, I'm sure I can hold her down while ploughing her from behind. Did he do that to her; did she like it? My heart squeezed and I gulped my beer to push down the surging jealousy. It's not enough, I have to take deep breathes too, but inconspicuously.

“Is that kind of thing important to you?” my voice cracked.

Dara's lips twisted and she made a small movement with her shoulder, it was seriously adorable, “Doesn't every girl wish for a fairytale?”

I wanted to say fuck the Chairman seat on Ekpo Conglomerate and give her a fucking fairytale. It was almost at the tip of my tongue to say it but she spoke again.

“So, what brings you here? I could have sworn you do not frequent this kind of places,” she said this not looking at me; she was being both curious and changing the topic.

“Smooth, Dara,” it warmed my heart that she knew something about me, it meant she thought about me.

She grinned and shrugged again, “I try.”

I took a deep breath, mirroring her movements when she'd had to confess why she was drinking, “I caught Clara with Augustine,” I cleared my throat, “Fucking in the boardroom this afternoon.”



“Oh,” her mouth dropped and instead of laughing at how comically stunned she looked, jeez, I was thinking of coaxing her tongue out so that I could tap my engorged dick on it. Yes, my mind is skinny-dipping in the gutter.

“Accounting Augustine?” her brow furrowed in what I could only assume was confused disbelief.

I nodded, “Yes.”

“Umm...weren’t you and Clara supposed to be married?” her eyes clouded in pity for me.

“It was implied, I’d never proposed though,” I couldn’t. I knew I had to, Uncle Jerome kept hinting at it. However, every day, especially, when I’ve glimpsed Dara, it became more and more herculean.

“My God, are you okay?” I scoffed at her concern, I didn’t feel shit about Clara and from her own reaction, she didn’t feel shit about me. We were just those kind of people that would do anything to remain at the top of the food chain.

I knew the kind of marriage we would have had. She fucking outside while I piled myself with more work acquiring and expanding the conglomerate, and of course, curing my stress with one night stands.

“Aww, you’re still in denial,” she reached out her hand, wriggling through the bottles on our table to lay it on mine.

It was supposed to be comforting but it triggered bolts of lightning through my body that left me breathing from my mouth while I tried not to twitch. My pulse raced and my eyes fixed on where we were connected.



I knew...it didn't matter what my ambitions were, I just knew she was going back to my apartment with me tonight.



## CHAPTER THREE

### *Dara*

There is a jolt of heat in my belly and the longer I held onto his hand the heat unfurled and filled the space that used to contain my intestines.

We stayed that way for a long time. I saw his gaze settle on our connected hands. I knew it was inappropriate and he was looking at my hand on his so that I could pull away, but I just couldn't bring myself to; it was as though my hand was glued on to his.

Then he shocked me by twisting his hand upward to grasp mine. Jesus, the rush of heat swirled and pooled in between my legs so much I couldn't contain my sudden gasp. When I looked up, I met his dark gaze and my panties suffered the onslaught of my sudden wetness.

What is going on here?

My breathing is erratic. I could hear my heartbeat as though my blood-pumping organ had relocated to my ears. My pulse is racing and I knew he felt it because his fingers currently stroked my wrist.

Sweet Lord, he had delicate looking fingers, long, like the rest of his physique and then I wondered if his penis was long too. I moaned in despair, shame suffusing my body for thinking such dirty thoughts.

His hold tightened on my wrist, "I don't care about Clara or who she fucks," his eyes bore into mine and I felt like he's telling me something but I dared not interpret it.

"Ok...okay," I took a deep breath and tried to pull my hand from his firm grasp. I was desperate to or I'd go down in history as the first woman to





orgasm from a guy holding her hand. I wondered if people got paid for entering the Guinness Book of World Record.

“Have you had something to eat?” he straightened, hand still holding mine while his eyes shone a glee I was still apprehensive to interpret.

Then I was faced with another problem, should I agree I’d not eaten, which would mean agreeing to go eat with him? Or, do I pretend my intestines weren’t twisting themselves in severe hunger pangs, then go home and eat left over pizza?

You see, the men I’ve dated had always wondered, quite vocally, why I would want to eat when I look like this – that’s plus sized. Yes, I know they are a host of dumb fucks. However, what did that make me that I was guilty when they said it? I even skipped meals or ate salads to satisfy my date and avoid being called or looked at as a glutton.

He took the decision from my hands, “Come on,” he pulled me to my feet. “I ordered dinner from my catering service and they always make more than I can eat. I need your help,” he smiled and shockingly, what he said didn’t sound insulting but playful, yet, I had to bristle on principle.

“Are you calling me a glutton?”

Law’s eyes widened, “What? No! Why, the hell, would I do that? It was just a harmless invitation to join me for dinner.”

With the way he’s staring at me ludicrously, I felt terrible for bristling, on principle or not. “Oh, umm...I have to pay for my drinks first,” hey, it was the first thing that came to mind to say in the awkward silence between us.



“Don’t worry, I’ll handle it,” he grinned and my insides melted. Dear God, save me, this man is just too potent for my peace of mind and body.

And I'd been fuming that he treated me as invisible? Jesus, now that he had his focus on me, I, kind of, miss my invisibility. Oh God, may I not embarrass myself this night.

He waited for me to pick my purse and phone, then he pulled me to his side, his arm settling on my lower back while he spoke to the waiter who'd showed up with a POS. I was getting the vibe that he couldn't keep from touching me, but, I don't know, isn't that preposterous?

I'm still afraid to interpret anything and I'm tipsy enough to maintain that I was just going for dinner at Lawrence Ekpo's house by 10:16 pm. Yes, let's stick with this conviction for now. My heart is battering my chest too much for a chance to reason well.

“Did you drive?”

I shook my head because being close to him had inundated my nostrils with his masculine scent, turning my brain to mush and clogged my throat with an immovable log.

“Good. We'll take my car. But I worry how you would have gone home with the much you'd been drinking?” he sounded genuinely concerned. As we walked, I felt my head reach to his shoulder; he was tall and the suit he had on couldn't hide the curled strength of his body, it was obvious in his gait.

The silence that followed made me look up from my moving feet to find him smiling down at me, waiting for a reply. “Oh, umm, I'd have ordered a Bolt.”



His sigh was heavy as he opened the passenger side door to his Lexus saloon car. “Are those things even safe after 8:00 pm for a beautiful lady like you? What about your car?”

Law thought I was beautiful?!

As you can imagine, I cannot breathe, so I’m grateful that he didn’t wait for my reply but shut the door and stalked across the front of the car, while simultaneously peeling off his fitted suit. He flung the cloth into the back and slid into the driver’s seat, sucking the little air that had been helping me recover from my shock.

I had to cough to speak, “Umm...I came out planning to get...drunk,” a stupid plan, but it’d been the only instinct I’d had when I’d gotten home and found it sans Bartholomew with a note waiting for me.

“I see.”

I didn’t know what that meant, but I couldn’t bring myself to ask.

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*Law*

My car already smelled like her and I love it. If it would not make me sound weird, I’d have asked her to spritz a bit of her perfume in my car to tide me over until we can figure out something permanent. Christ, just thinking it sounds stupid and crazy.

I missed my hands on her. When she reached for me on that table, she had no idea that she robbed me of air and made me wish for something I couldn’t have. My gaze flipped from the road to her; or could I?



It felt like a dream that after over three years, I'd finally touched her in the most unplanned situation. Now she was following me to my house. She was in my car, about to be in my living space. My heart thumped and I had to flex my fingers on the steering wheel to curb some of my excitement.

The silence in the car is both oppressive and distracting. I spared her another glance and became instantly obsessed with knowing what she was thinking.

I have to breathe through my mouth as my eyes trailed her profile, thank God she was looking away from me or else, she'd be worried my eyes were more on her than on the road.

She was full everywhere my eyes touched. The first day I'd seen her, I'd just wanted to forget all my struggles and ambitions and be cuddled by her. And every day after that, she inspired calm in me, she had no idea how I have to fight to seem mean at her when I wanted to do the very opposite.

Clara hated her immensely because I never allowed her say untoward things about her in my presence. I would always defend and praise Dara for her brilliant work and that pissed off Clara every time.

I heard her inhaled breath before she turned hesitantly to me, “Your car is nice.”

It's obvious that the silence is making her uncomfortable, “Yes, it is. I want to get the Lexus ES new model soon.”

“Modest too,” she murmured. I don't think I was supposed to hear that but I did.



My laugh is loud in the confined, air-conditioned space and she jerked at the sound. “You’re funny. I knew there was something mischievous about you, but you cover it up with the boss lady attitude.”

Yes, I’m having word vomit over here. Everyone feels I’m this quiet, intense workaholic. I’m pretty sure some of those guys are afraid of me. But it’s all a front, an image to fit the cut-throat corporate environment and to let all of them know who’s the boss.

Except, I’ve never experienced that ever affecting Dara. She avoided me, no doubt. It’s so frustrating when she walked away from gatherings because I was nearby or seemed like I was approaching the circle. She’d never stop to talk if I stood with the person needing her attention; our communications happened over the conference table, in briefs and reports; we couldn’t even be civil and it was all my fault.

Yet, she never cowered from me. Sometimes, I even think my mean rich kid attitude amused her.

Now though, she’s looking at me as though I’ve gone stark, raving mad. Actually, I have and it’s because of her.

“I’ve never heard you make that sound.”

“What sound?” I frowned, my head turning at interval to get a glimpse of her face.

“The happy sound.”

I sighed, “See, Dara, I know I’ve given you reason to hate me as a human being, but I had my reasons.”



“Would you kindly give me a few of those reasons to convince me that you aren’t a sociopath and I’m not going to go missing after I step into your house?”

My laugh is a bark until I turned and caught her widened eyes at me, shit, she’s serious. “Right, reasons, let’s start from the obvious. You’re the only worthy contender at the company, if I got rid of you, who would I flex my brain muscle with?”

She sputtered, “What?”

Her half smile warmed my belly and the fact that she focused on me made me want to keep it that way.

“Number two, if I ever make Chairman of the board, I’ll need trustworthy, intelligent, strong-willed people and you’re number one on that list.”

Dara’s eyebrow went up, “Chairman of the board, uh?”

I shrugged and she shook her head. “Last but not the least,” I said as I turned into my gate, my solicitous security man having widened the entrance at the blast of my horn. I made her wait for it as I drove in and parked my car in the garage.

“Wait, I’ll get the door for you.”

I stepped out of the car, pretending I didn’t hear her slight gasp. I have no idea what I’m doing. Did this mean I was done with Clara? What about the merger, what would Uncle Jerome say?

Urrg, fuck it all to hell. I was living in this moment and that meant, I was going to give her a slice of fairytale in this break from reality we are sharing.



“Thank you,” she murmured, I could hear her breath hitch as her arm brushed my belt.

It was innocent but the muscles of my stomach flinched and my crotch tightened.

“After you,” I indicated before me, making her climb the ten-step stair to my front door.

Sue me, I’m a man and Dara was at her most alluring in her pencil skirts. It was what I’d first seen her in and my fantasies featured that a lot.

She wore a black and white striped one now and it did wonders to her arse. Christ, how could one person have all this lusciousness behind her? My mouth actually watered as I followed her up the stairs – at a snail pace, mind you.

And those heels, four inches of slick, sexy, shiny red leather that matched with her purse – she wore it with aplomb. The flair of her denim, peplum top draped over the sharp widening of her hips and arse. And let’s not talk about her baby-looking, light skin. I have no idea how I’ve pretended for more than three years. I have no idea how no one, even her, have caught my longing stares whenever we meet.

At last year’s Christmas party, I’d spent most of the evening in a corner following all her movements. She’d worn a sexy dress that had caused me multiple wet dreams that night. It was as though she’d embedded herself in my soul and my longing had come in form of a dream that had ended with me coming in my shorts.

It wasn’t a mentionable story. I’d been glad that I’d spent that night alone, so, my embarrassment remained with me.



“Lawrence?”

My cock jerked in my pants at her whisper of my name. I'd reached the landing but had just been staring at her until her lips moved and I had to stiffen my entire body to keep from stepping close and kissing her senseless. At least, let me get her inside first.

“Sorry, got carried away there,” I grinned at her but she looked confused and curious, and I held my breath hoping she'd ask me why I'd been carried away.

However, she just licked her lips and nodded.

I unlocked my door knowing she was nervous. Who wouldn't she be? What we were doing now, me inviting her to my house and her agreement was leaning on the blurred lines of professionalism.

“Welcome to my home,” I smiled when I heard her sharp gasp at my switching on the hall lights. A few steps forward had me holding her hand to help her down the three steps into my sitting room.

“Your house is exquisite,” she enthused, her gaze wide and exploring.

Her words warmed the length of my belly, up to my heart. My chest widened at her praise, and I ignored the fact that I'd never felt this way when Clara had visited. Well, Clara had sniffed and said ‘Not bad’, but I'd not cared for her opinion.

As for Dara, I'd practically been holding my breath for what she thought about my home. It pleased me so much that she loved it.

“Let's go to the kitchen, the food is in there.”





Again, my hand settled on her lower back, close to the curve of her impressive arse, my new favourite thing to do, and led her through the tastefully furnished sitting room, by the dining area and into the huge kitchen.

Another gasp came from her. I looked at the modern kitchen I had never had the time or longing to use. It was why I ordered my meals from a catering company. I smiled because more warmth engulfed my insides from her appreciation.

“Your kitchen is divine. I'd practically move my work in here – slaying and cooking and watching TV all at once – that's the life!”

I grinned, swallowing hard to move the lump in my throat from being so happy that I'd learnt personal things about her. She loved her job, loved to cook and watch TV – and my kitchen provided all of that.

“I wouldn't mind if you moved here.”

It was the silence that echoed in my kitchen and her stunned expression when I turned to her that made me rethink what I'd just said and I fought to control my cringe for my unfiltered words.

Jeez, why would I let something like that slip?

Since my arm was still around her, I let my fingers tickle her side and grinned when she jerked and struggled to curb her giggle. “Where's your sense of humour?” I asked, even though my mind illuminated with lighted bulbs at how responsive she was to my simple touch. I've gone a hundred steps forward imagining her response to a more sensual touch.

My thought is sucking much needed air from my body. So, I mentally shifted the sultry images aside to be visited when I'm alone in my bed.



Her hand flew to her bosom as she chuckled, “Okay, wow, thank God. You almost gave me a heart attack.”

I grinned at what she’d said when I wanted to frown and demand to know why the idea of moving into my house would be such a terrible thing.

Urrg, I’m falling deeper and deeper into a hole I'd thought was shallow. “My lady,” I said, helping her onto one of the stools placed at my central counter.

The brilliant light from the high ceiling glowed on her skin and made her more beautiful than I could have imagined she’d look sitting in my kitchen. She belonged there, and I cannot move away from her to get the food neatly stacked on the other side of the counter. My breath is choppy as I stood there, imagining widening her thick thighs to stand in between them and make love to all of her, right there in my kitchen.

Her eyes looked into mine and the situation quickly morphed into one of those tension filled, romantic moments in movies. Her breath hitched, I could see her pulse racing at the base of her throat. Was she feeling what I felt or just scared at the weird situation?

Dara blinked and looked away from me and my breath came back in a whoosh, I'd not even realised I'd been holding it.

“Let me microwave the food,” I croaked and had to drag myself from her side while trying not to walk awkwardly with the strain in my pants. Jeez, I swallowed several times as I opened the disposable packs of food.

“Umm, there’s rice, sauce with chopped beef, liver and kidney pieces, there’s grilled chicken, fish and a salad on the side.”



“Who’s birthday is it?” she smiled and I barked another laugh, she was really funny.

“More like celebrating you in my house,” and this time, I cannot control the flinch that followed my careless words but it’s fine because I’m backing her as I microwave.

“Are you comfortable?” she nodded in reply and shifted her weight on my stool. I narrowed my eyes at her disbelievingly.

“What?” she smiled, her eyes widened.

“I don’t think you’re comfortable,” I walked back to her while saying this and then I crouched in front of her stool and pretended not to have her heard her gasp as I reached for her shiny red shoes and tenderly pulled them off her chubby, adorable feet.

“Hmm, size 36. You have really small feet.”

“What are you doing?” her voice sounded husky and it’s not helping with my base urge to kiss up her fresh leg.

“Making you comfortable,” and I’m glad it’s the only thing I have time to say when the microwave dinged. I winked at her as I walked away. I pulled out the pack of rice and shoved in the sauce and chicken to warm.

“White or red wine?” I asked, opening my large fridge.

Dara had to clear her throat and I ignored how apprehensive she looked at me, “Umm, white is fine.”

I pulled out the Castillo Grande white that had been in my fridge for a while, I’m more of a whiskey guy but in cases like this, I’d definitely enjoy sharing the bottle with Dara.



I had a glass of the golden drink in front of her before I returned to the microwave to dish out the food in two plates, equal measures. Dara's eyes widened at the amount of food.

“Mine is more than yours, don't worry,” I grinned and her lashes fluttered guiltily over the food, at me, and back to the food.

I narrowed my eyes at her, wondering what would cloud her eyes with apprehension and then it hit me. I'd fucking stab those men who'd perhaps made her feel guilty for eating because she was chubby.

“Is something wrong with the food?”

“No,” she croaked and lifted her spoon, but didn't eat.

“I hope you aren't one of those ladies who shy from eating in front of a man. I appreciate women who enjoy their meals no matter what.” True, I waited expectantly to watch her open her mouth for the first scoop, the chew and movement of her neck when she swallowed.

“You do?” her eyes are hopeful and I want to hug her and tell her that her weight didn't bother me, that I'd wanted to fuck her the moment I'd laid eyes on her.

But, I settled for a simple, “I do.” I cleared my throat, scooped a side of rice and sauce and carried it to her mouth. “Don't leave me hanging, open for me,” I'm not sure that's my voice, it sounded too hoarse.

A host of emotions flitted over her face. She licked her plump lips and opened for me. I might have hummed as her mouth covered the spoon and pulled the food, but I'm not sure because I'm lost staring at how her tongue flicked out to catch an errant grain of rice.



I immediately grabbed the serviette I'd laid out, slid down from my stool and tenderly held up her face to wipe the corner of her mouth. I'm shocked at my actions, so I could only imagine what she was thinking. Her eyes held mine and next I know she burst into tears.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Dara*

Maybe, the whole kindness from the second meanest person I knew (Clara being the first) triggered the tears.

One minute I was trying to understand why he was feeding me, trying to understand his attitude the whole night, then he went and tenderly wiped my mouth.

The TLC just reminded me of all the shit I've gotten from men my whole adult life. No man had ever treated me this way. Bartholomew carrying me to bed was simply because he could. I knew deep down it wasn't out of love or care for me, but I'd hoped it could be, except he'd just been doing all he could to defraud me.

All that uncertainty, the horror and hurt from some of the things men had said to me, the shame I'd gotten from them treating me as an inconvenience, the deep annoyance and pain from Bartholomew running off with my money, possibly with a slim woman in tow, crashed into me at that moment.

Here stood a man who belonged to another woman. Why couldn't he be mine? I knew that he and Clara had an arranged thing going, I'd heard the rumours about the merger, so, I knew despite catching her sleeping with another man, the merger remained more important than their feelings or bruised egos.

Nevertheless, why, the hell, was he doing this? Why did he invite me to his house? Why did he wipe my tears; why did we have long silent pauses staring into each other's eyes, like now?



“Shit, Dara, whatever I did, I’m sorry,” his frown spoke of his concern for my tears.

What do I tell him? Do I confess that even though he’d treated me as invisible this whole time, I’d still caught myself fantasizing about him? It hadn’t been a conscious act, but, there’d been times I might have used him as inspiration when using my battery operated boyfriend. Gross, I know, we are enemies after all, but it is what it is.

His apology made me choke, my face grimaced readying for another bout of crying, and I’m about to cover my face with my hands because my cry-face is ugly as fuck, but he stopped me from doing that.

Law’s hands are warm when he pulled my hands from my face, then his fingers settled on my chin, caressing up my cheek and grabbing my neck to pull me close...

Oh dear Lord, what is he doing?

I wanted to vocalise my question but his lips hovered on mine, his warm breath brushed my face, sending my anticipation into overdrive. Yes, anticipation, for something I’d not known or acknowledged that I wanted...from him...his lips of me.

“I’m sorry,” it came in a whisper and I knew that it felt important to ask why he was apologizing but when he lips merged with mine in the sweetest of kisses, nothing was as important as how Law’s groan made me feel.

Nothing could compare importance with the slow caress of his hands over my face, my nape, pulling me impossibly closer. Nothing compared to how he managed my lips, the slow movement of his, the tiny but firm



coaxing of my tongue to tangle with his and when it did, his deep-throated grunt of approval and a deepening of the kiss.

“You have the softest lips, Dara,” I was just thinking that of his but okay, let’s bask in the fact that Lawrence Ekpo enjoyed merging lips with me.

His head dipped down to grab my lips, this time more intense than before. The sound of our breaths slashed the silence of the kitchen harshly as we panted and kissed and he’d leaned into me so much that I was half lying on the counter, my elbow inches away from my untouched plate of food.

“I never imagined it would be this sweet and I’ve wanted to kiss you for the longest time,” he growled with his lips nipping the corner of my mouth.

My head fell back, I blew out air through pursed lips and he wasted no time in kissing down my neck to the top of my breasts visible through the V of my peplum top.

“You smell so good, always driving me mad whenever you pass by me,” a moan I cannot control escaped my throat at his words. “I’ve dreamt about you all this time,” he continued while his hands caressed all over my body, currently slipping under my top.

It was as though his hands touching my skin drove him mad, so he bit my neck, startling a whimper from me, but then he licked the spot and I moaned while struggling to make sense of his words.

“Come to the room with me,” he whispered, his gaze holding mine.

His eyes were dilated, like he was so turned on he looked drunk. He bit his lower lip as his eyes shifted and dropped to my mouth as though





barely controlling his need to kiss me again. I could feel his hands under my top, caressing, grabbing, kneading and sliding down to my buttocks, scratching the stretched material of my skirt as though to tear it off, but he's unable to, so he returned to under my top.

We all know what will happen if I follow him to his room. We all know we weren't going there to discuss Ad strategies or business reports. We both knew clothes would disappear and the blurred professional line would vanish entirely.

Despite squeezing my thighs together to curb the maddening tingling in my pussy, despite worrying that my slickness might soak through and stain his stool, I am very aware how the aftermath of this situation might become detrimental to my career and me.

There was his respect for me that might become non-existent. If people heard about this and told Clara, she'd stop at nothing to make sure I'm permanently embarrassed. I might get a sack or demoted if the boss heard this.

These terrible things could mess up all my years of hard work to get to where I am. My reply should be a firm no even after melting at his unexpected words. It should be no for a lot of obvious reasons, but then he groaned impatiently, leaned in and bit my chin, hard.

I never knew pain could morph into the sweetest pleasure and this was what happened to me. Would you want me to say no?

Come on guys, this is Lawrence Ekpo we're talking about. It's not that I believe the sweet things he'd said, it could all be lust. But this kind of random lusting for me did not happen every day and from a man I



thought did not notice my existence except as a hurdle he had to get through to win.

It's going to be a onetime thing. I'm heartbroken, a perfect justification to do anything that'll make me feel better. With his hands on me, I already felt better. Let's ignore the white elephant in the room and enjoy this.

“Okay,” I whispered and his mouth crashed on mine. If I thought the other kiss was intense, I'd been joking.

Law swept me off the stool with his arm around my waist. Then he plunged his tongue into my mouth, swirling and tangling with mine while he pressed his impressive erection on my belly, the one I'd not been able to appreciate in my sitting position.

I moaned and don't think much of it when my hand caressed down and grabbed it through his pants.

Law hissed, his temple falling on my shoulder while his hips undulated, pressing his cock into my hand. “Let's go,” he growled, grabbed my wrist, you know the one connected to the hand that had just held Lawrence Ekpo's dick, and dragged me by his sitting room into his bedroom.

It's a beautiful room. It should be, seeing as its undressing owner was the most exquisite man I'd ever seen naked.

Without clothes, his height, broad chest and the strength of his arms seemed emphasized. I knew he was lean muscled but sans clothes, his stomach looked like a dark river with ripples ending in a sharp inverted triangle that led my eyes to the long, hard length hanging from his dark,



lush bush. His lengthy hardness hung half-mast as though its weight was too much to become a perfect horizontal.

I must have whimpered as I admired the sinew of muscles in his thighs as he prowled towards me because he grinned and said, “I like the sounds you make, Dara. I want to make you increase the volume of them and hope you scream my name too.”

Mad o!

I never knew what that expression meant but it just fit into this situation because everything happening now was crazy.

He towered over me and I looked up, my eyes lingering on his full luxurious beard, the one that was similar to the bush below. I'd never have thought I'd like a guy with a full beard, but all Law had to do to change my opinion was smile.

The smile had not been for me but for one of the executives, an older woman. But I'd caught it. With his hair cut low to his scalp, the trimmed beard fit his dark, up-long face, his already small eyes crinkled, glinting humour and his white teeth, a beautiful contrast against his dark skin, made an appearance, flashing the slim diastema in between his upper incisors.

I could still recall the whoosh of warmth I'd experienced across the board room and how my heart had hammered when I'd returned to my office. But that warmth couldn't be compared to the heat he had rolling in me as he stood here proud, elegant and naked.

He had a beautiful body, like that of a model, sleek and unimaginably attractive, that I begun to feel a pinch of shame for my body being so big and perhaps ungainly.



But my concerns obviously don't stop him because he pulled me close and kissed me again. I vaguely hear the sound of zip unravelling just before I felt a brush of cold breeze from his AC on my back.

I am entirely lost in the swirl of heat and pleasure engulfing my senses, so when I heard his growl and opened my eyes, I'm shocked to find myself naked. Okay, I'll not ask how that happened without my knowledge, but would appreciate that it's been done without much fuss from me.

I'm standing naked with Lawrence Ekpo in his room.

The thought is freaking me out and I bit my lip, wanting to tell him we should switch off the light but he shocked me again.

“You're so beautiful. That's my third reason, Dara,” his finger flicked my nipple and I gasped. I'd forgotten about the reasons he'd been giving for not hurting me in his house.

Another kiss and before I knew it, I was lying on his bed with him over me, his eyes genuinely appreciative. I didn't know what he saw but I loved the way he's looking at me. In that moment, I felt cherished, loved and oh...

“Fuck, you're so wet for me, Dara,” his fingers curved upward in my pussy, rubbing a spot I'd not known I owned.

“Fuck!” this from me. A first. I've never been mindless during sex, I'm always self conscious even when I'm using my vibrator, so my pleasure is never full.

Not now though. I couldn't think as the sound of his moving fingers in my pussy reported how wet I was. He didn't mind, I saw his head lower



to my breasts, licked up the nipples, one after the other before sucking them hard.

My pussy muscles clenched and before I knew it, I was screaming his name in an upheaval of pleasure. I had no control over the movement of my body. I'm thrashing and unconsciously trying to throw him off me and his fingers out of my pussy because it's too much. But he didn't let me, he held me down, his weight pressing down my right thigh, while his right knee blocked my left thigh from closing.

Don't let anyone deceive you that strength is in bulk. If that was true, I'd be able to throw his lithe form off me and he'd be unable to hold my thighs open. I'm gasping and whining as he doggedly continued his attack on my sensitive pussy with his fingers; his words aren't helping either.

“Come for me, baby. Yes, just like that.”

“Please, please, please,” I have no idea what I'm pleading for, but the pleasure is just too intense and I needed him to slow down.

“Sssh, Dara, let me give you the pleasure I've wanted so much to give you since the first day I saw you.”

“Oh!” I screamed and I don't know if it's at his words or because he pinched my clit hard before sliding into my wet hole and fingering me senseless.

“I need another come from you, darling before I fuck you. Will you come for me?”

I'm pretty sure I shook my head-no, but I felt him slide down my side and my brow furrowed in wonder at what he was about to do. I didn't



have to wait long when I felt his beard, that lush collection at his chin, brush my inner thigh, tickling me into consciousness from the just concluded climax.

A gurgle that should have been a ‘what are you doing?’ spilled from my slack lips morphing into a keening moan when his flattened tongue licked the length of my slit, from bottom to top and settled under my fat mound, his tongue swirling as though searching for my clit.

My head, which had tried to rise to look down at him, fell back on the bed and my back arched. My cloudy mind directed I close my legs but the swelling heat in the pit of my stomach had me widening for him.

It’s very unlike me but my right hand grabbed the back of his head and held him against my dripping pussy. Then I shocked myself by sliding my left hand down my belly, the mound and finally, fingers mixing in my wetness, my middle finger dipped, brushing his tongue, I found my clit.

“Not happening. I, alone will give you pleasure,” he commanded and immediately grabbed my wrist, pinning it to my thigh and plunged under my mound again, this time, he didn’t tease, his stiffened tongue punched my clit eliciting a grunt from me.

He went ahead to blow my mind by moving his tongue over the sensitive nub in a rapidly continuous horizontal movement. My gasps are loud, my breath is hitched, my mouth is entirely dry from it being open the whole time he’d played my body like a guitar – his fingers seemed to be everywhere.

“Law, please...”



His growl reverberated through my pussy, causing it to leak more. He groaned in blatant pleasure and lapped up everything. The slurping sounds of his enjoyment reaching my ears, driving me nuts with pinprick tingles of sensation.

I could feel his tongue swirl down there as though he was making sure he touched every inch of my pussy. Then, as I began panting rapidly, my ears having gone deaf from the swell of pleasure bombarding my body, the fingers that had been rubbing my clit, suddenly pinched the ball of nerves and my scream soared, sounding echoingly loud in his room.

“Yes, baby, let go,” his fingers plunged into me continuously, keeping the swollen nerves alive and making me mad. “You’re so beautiful!”



## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Dara*

My-oh-dearest-my!

Who knew I could come from a man's tongue and fingers?

Could I even describe my experience as come? It seemed too lame and under-appreciated if called that. It was an explosion - twice, from just his tongue and fingers! If he told me he used supernatural means to elicit all that pleasurable reaction from me, I'd totally believe him.

The thing is, out of my seven serious relationships in my 33 years on earth, only two had attempted to give me head and it'd both been so lacklustre I'd written the highly overrated sexual act off. Cunnilingus had become the fabled golden goose to me, just stories that I read about. Unavoidable, since I love romance novels as my leisure of choice, and knew the design was to keep women like me entertained – a fairytale.

Except now, as I lay there trying to catch my breath, my mind sparking with rainbow coloured glitters, I didn't just believe in unicorns now, I just rode one.

“No, baby, not yet,” he chuckled.

Did I say that aloud?

The sound of his humour, deep voice and all, raced through my veins like smooth chocolate dribble. With my lower lip stuck in between my teeth, I finally dragged up my eyelids and beheld the man over me.





“There she is,” his eyes sparkled with what I’m afraid to mention; I swear, everything about Law this past hour or hours - I have no idea, scared me to interpret.

“Thank you,” I said feelingly; not what I wanted to say or the ideal expression at this point, but forgive my mushy brain, it was still trying to boot after the profound pleasure it’d experienced.

“Don’t thank me yet, darling,” Law leaned down and merged his mouth with mine.

You would think I'd be disgusted from tasting myself on his mouth; you'd think my body had had enough shocking pleasure for the month? The answer is no, nothing of the sort because discovering his face and beard smeared with my juices got my entire body lighting like a Christmas tree and when I tasted myself on his tongue, recalling how he'd enjoyed being down there, I began tingling down there, needing more than his fingers.

“I've got you, baby.”

I must have spoken aloud again but who cares about my lack of verbal filter when the most beautiful man form raised himself to his knee, his lean muscled torso curved in a slight ‘S’ as he looked down and dressed his long, black and upwardly mobile shaft in a condom with his hips thrust forward.

Moisture is dripping from my pussy and foaming in my mouth as I stared at his slow, seductive movements. He stroked his hard length, I don’t know the numbers, but it was definitely bigger than I've ever experienced. I moaned, my thighs rubbed together as I eagerly yearned to be impaled with his pole.



“You want this, Dara?”

My head felt like a bubblehead as I nodded enthusiastically and he grinned at me, the sight of his diastema shining through that beard, one my fingers tangled in when he leaned down, made me swoon.

“Good, because I want you too, very much,” his cock jerked, lightly tapping the flesh of my pussy and causing me shivers of sweetness. “I’ve wanted you for so long, dreamt about you for the longest time,” he growled into my neck and I sighed, loving his words but unable to believe.

It was as though I was cataloguing them in a separate mind-file to analyse later. As of now, I enjoyed them as they added to my pleasure.

Law’s body is pressed on mine even though he held off some of his weight on his arms as he nibbled up my jaw until he was breathing harshly against my mouth while his hips undulated, grinding his hardness against my sloppy pussy.

I gasped my pleasure in rhythm with the upward thrust of my hips, my open mouth expelling puffs of air when his length pressed so hard it bridged the slit of my wet pussy.

“Look at me, Dara,” he gasped and I opened my tightly shut eyes, blurred but still able to see the magnificence before me. “I want to see your eyes, I want to see you the first time you welcome me into your amazing body.”

A whimper escaped my throat, my stomach trembled and my legs felt weak. I had no idea if these reactions were from his words or the dipping of his cock-head in my entrance as though testing to see if it would fit – the cock fit but he withdrew before I experienced its full potential.



My grunt is that of protest, a frown marred my brow and I must have glared at him when he chuckled. Then he held open my fleshy, dripping pussy with the thumb and forefinger of his left hand while his right hand grabbed his length and guided it past my entrance. My eyes rolled back into my temple as the hard length went on and on, stretching my narrow channel and making me wonder if he was aiming for my womb.

“Fuck, Dara,” he growled and held himself still for a moment before he withdrew, grunting the whole time and then hissing as he plunged back in. “I knew you’d be sweet, I even imagined it but nothing prepared me for this, darling.”

Okay to all he’s saying. If he’d said ‘let’s kill my uncle tomorrow’, I’d nod and agree because I could not make sense of anything except what I was feeling.

My whole body has narrowed to the point we were connected. It’s an earthy realisation when it felt like everything that made sense in this life came from the core of us being joined in this moment.

It felt like the best of life and joy were the ethereal waves rippling through my body and soul every time his hips smashed mine, every time he pumped into me, every time he fucked me.

“Don’t stop,” I pleaded, my legs having moved at their own accord to anchor at his shoulders, widening more for him.

“I wasn’t planning to,” he gasped and then changed position, he twisted to the left, still buried in me, he grabbed my right thigh, shifted it from his left shoulder and draped my calf over his right shoulder.

Law wrapped his arm about my thick thigh and plunged in way deeper than before. I’ve never made such a desperate sound in my life; it almost



sounded like life was being strangled from my body when it was the very opposite.

Sensations have broken into my cells and were heading to my soul – oh yeah, soul lost too from this mindless pleasure.

“Dara, oh God, Dara. My sweet...fuck, I can’t even...” his words were as jumbled as my thoughts, it appeared we both couldn’t think straight.

He grabbed my breasts, squeezing them as grunts left his throat in tandem with his quickened plunges into me.

We were in a scissored position now – me on my side, my left thigh in between his thighs while my right leg still draped on his right shoulder as he pumped into me.

Now he could grab both my breast and arse. Now he could slap my arse, grab a cheek and spread it, his stomach muscle stiffening as he leaned over to watch his length tunnel into me.

“Fuck, this the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.”

Then as unexpected as could be imagined, his hand slid down the cleft of my arse. His middle finger brushed over my back hole a few times before tenderly rubbing around it, pressing the entrance and softly tapping on it.

The forbidden nature of that act rapidly sent me over an edge I'd been rhythmically approaching. A wave of sensation swooped over me, crashing breathless pleasure never imagined against the walls of my body.



I was thrashing on the bed and his helpless grunts came to me as though from a tunnel, echoing and far off. I took a while to feel him trembling against me the same way I was trembling against him.

“That was...phenomenal,” he gasped, his body limp on me, our bodies slick with sweat and jerking with sparks of thrills from our massive climax.

I would agree with his summation or have mine because there were several adjectives that didn't really compare with the experience I've just had yet could be close, but I'm too pleurably weak to bother.

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### *Dara*

My sense of time was skewed, as I didn't know how long I'd passed out but the sound of my phone ringing pierced through the heavy fog of my unconsciousness. I jerked awake trying to recall where I was, I rubbed my eyes to clear my blurry sight and the tightening of a muscled arm around me brought every delicious detail hurtling back.

Of course, my heart started hammering at the flashes of what we'd done. Then came the apprehension of what all this meant and the bad consequences which were about to follow our mindless night of debauchery.

I looked down and flinched at the image of our tangled limbs, a sensual sight I'd have appreciated and swooned over if I wasn't so sure this had all been a terrible idea.

The ring-tone of my phone finally made meaning to me and I realised my sister was the one calling.



My eyes scanned his beautifully furnished room, an obviously male space, following the sound of my incessantly ringing phone, I found the device on top of the drawer on my side of the bed.

I frowned trying to recall when I'd brought the phone with me following the process of how I'd gotten to Lawrence Ekpo's bedroom. Then it occurred to me that he must have gone to bring my things to the room after I'd passed out.

Good for him, I thought, that he'd had such strength after that exhausting experience together. However, deep down, my heart melted at how considerate the act was – a departure from the Law I've known this past years. Except, I could also argue that I didn't know him at all since we've never found ourselves in a situation that would warrant his choosing to be considerate to me or not.

Too many thoughts swirling in my mind while my sister attempted to blow my phone with her incessant calls. With a few manoeuvres, I was able to free my breast from Law's firm grasp and roll away from his body. I have to tighten my jaws to ignore the profound feeling of loss I felt leaving the cocoon of his arms, it's a wonder the ringing of the phone didn't wake him.

“Hello,” I whispered into the phone while turning to check if I'd disturbed him, except I'm lost tracing the sexy smoothness of his dark skin over well defined lithe musculature.

“Dara! My God, where have you been? I've been trying to reach you since I got home and found the note left by that arsehole Bartholomew. God, I hope you didn't do anything stupid like hurt yourself or something. Are you okay? Why didn't you take your car? Where are you?”



I sighed, biting my lower lip and curbing a moan while my hips shunted forward on the bed in a bid to relief the tingling ache of sharp desire in my pussy. Jeez, one night with Law has turned me into a shameless hussy.

“Hello, Dara?!”

“Umm...what did you say?”

“You didn’t hear all I’d said?” Inem, my sister’s voice, cracked in her worry. “Are you okay?”

With the delicious ache in my pussy, sure, I’m great. But that wasn’t how one was supposed to feel when she’d been defrauded by her no good, low life boyfriend, except the situation had brought her so much pleasure, never before imagined, on Law’s bed.

“I’m fine. You need to come and pick me though,” I said these words even though my heart constricted painfully at the thought of leaving his bed. It would be awesome to have a repeat of that experience, preferably, the whole night.

“My car developed a fault today,” she whined. My sister at 30 was an investment banker who has refused to drop the car our father had bought for her twenty-third birthday for a new one. I couldn’t really blame her though, we were brought up in a home that didn’t value flashiness. It took me a while before I sold my Toyota Corolla to buy a Camry.

“Use mine,” I said the same moment I forcefully dragged my gaze from Law’s sleeping handsome form to swing my legs to the cold tiles of the floor. “I’ll text you the address,” I ended the call before she could say anything else and opened the message app.



It took less than a minute to send the message and if Inem moved immediately, she'd be here in ten minutes – yup, it appeared we lived in the same estate but I'd not known that. He lived in his built home while my sister and I were lucky father hadn't rented out the apartment we were living in, even though he demanded for monthly rents once in a while – for drinks out with friends, he'd said.

I was bent over shoving my second foot into my panties when I was startled and almost fell over at his growl.

“What a lovely sight to wake up to.”

I heard the light humour and pleasure in his tone and stiffened imagining the sight he'd indeed woken up to – me bent over and my considerable buttocks exposed to him.

“I want you like that when next I fuck you,” his voice is like sin; a dark, smoky thread of seduction, floating through the distance from the bed to where I stood immobile, wrapping me in the possibility of unimaginable pleasure.

My heart is stuttering hard in my chest and my legs felt like they were about to give in to the urge to returning to the bed, but it was time to use my brain not my body.

I swallowed instead and cleared my throat, “Who said anything about a next time?” my voice sounded unconvincing even to me.

Silence met my reply and it scared me because I was torn with wanting him to let me go without fuss or awkwardness and yearning for him to insist I stay.





I huffed and quickly dressed up before turning to him. He must have pulled on his white boxer shorts while I was dressing up. I swallowed the log in my throat as I watched his stomach muscle contract – a beautifully sexy sight, as he pulled on a grey pair of joggers and a soft white t-shirt that draped over his form.

“I’ll drop you at home,” he tone sounded cold and distant and I’m left feeling close to tears.

But what was I expecting though – a plea to stay till daybreak, then what; a marriage proposal or an offer to date exclusively? All the above please, but preposterous because it would never happen.

This cold demeanour and perhaps, a smirk in tow, is what’d been expected, but for all those amazing orgasms, smirks and cold tones were totally worth it.

So, I cleared my throat, my toes folding and releasing in a nervous tick, “My sister is coming to pick me.”

“I see,” his gaze, which weren’t cold at all, met mine and held. I had that same feeling of him telling me something but – yes, I could not and dared not hope for the impossible.

As though disappointed from my thought, that’s if he could hear them, his eyes lowered, trailing the length of my body and giving me goosebumps until they landed at my feet.

“I’ll get your shoes from the kitchen,” I could only draw descent breath when he turned and left and I followed with my phone and purse in suddenly sweaty hands.



We will return to being enemies and it will be easier because now, I'd be avoiding him even more and he could make me even more invisible again, easy, right? I hope so, I thought, even though it broke my heart.

My phone rang, flashing my sister's ID the same moment he walked out from the kitchen with my shoes dangling from his long fingers, those fingers that had been inside me driving me crazy.

“I'm sorry that you didn't get to eat.”

“I'll be right out, Inem,” I cut the call and tried to breathe through the log in my throat. “I'm sorry you didn't either.”

He scoffed, and came to stand before me, “Oh, but I did, sweet, sweet Dara,” his gaze bore into mine and I knew he wasn't talking about the rice and sauce we'd abandoned on his kitchen counter.

I'm flustered and this left me speechless, so I did the only thing I could at that time, I snatched my shoes from his fingers and turned to his front door, opening it and breathing in the cold night breeze.

My hands shook so much I couldn't even consider waiting to wear my shoes at his stoop. I went down the steps and headed for his gate at a clipped pace.

Except, he measured that pace and passed me to open the gate for me like the gentleman I'm realising he was. I glimpsed my car parked out there but he stood in such a way I had to brush him to pass through the opening and he knew it.

He quirked his eyebrow at me, a smirk on his lips; whichever way I turned, I'd either brush my boobs on his chest or my arse on his...



My breath caught as I experienced a full body shiver at the sex position that would required my arse be against his groin. Jesus, what's happening to me; I'd become the heroines of my precious romance novels from just hours with Law.

A bit of vindictiveness overcame me and I turned my arse to him, making sure, I pressed his groin as I passed. He groaned, his hand going to my waist to hold me in place, I even felt his unconscious thrust, but I pushed past, continuing my clipped pace towards my car while biting down on my lower lip to curb my triumphant smile.

However, another thing I was learning about him was his pushiness. I was practically floating to where my sister had parked across the road, the tarred road was deserted because of the late hour. My smile was widening as I recalled his groan behind me when he snagged my arm and swivelled me around right into his arms.

Law leaned down without warning and smashed his lips on mine. It was a bruising kiss, a kind of punishment yet his hands on my face were tender. Yet when he drew me close, his hardness nudged my belly and he wasn't hiding it. He actually undulated against me, groaning against my mouth.

My entire body flushed and turned to mush in his arms. I'm about to drop my phone and purse and hug him back but my sister chose then to press down on the horn, blasting it and startling both of us from the embrace.

Well, I was the only one startled because Law took his sweet time, nibbling my lips and dropping tiny wet kisses that left me gasping for more before he withdrew and looked down into my blurred gaze.



“I’ll see you tomorrow, Dara,” he kissed me again before turning my now puppet-like body and opening the passenger’s door for me. I heard him say hello to my sister and asked that she drive safely before he bent from the waist, kissed the side of my head and shut the door.

I’m still trying to breathe freely four minutes later when my sister, obviously not able to take the silence in the car anymore, blurted, “Jeez, Dara, who was that?”

“Lawrence Ekpo,” I answered robotically because I was yet to recover from that kiss or even figure out what it meant.

“What?!” I could hear her eyes widening from the tone of her voice. “Your rival at work?”

“Mm-hmm,” my eyes stared at the moving scenery unseeingly.

“I don’t understand, you thought it would be a good idea to hook-up with your competition at work because your boyfriend scammed you and disappeared with your money?”

I nodded, “Yep, that about summed up my Thursday night.”

“Wow. Not that I’m encouraging you o, because I’ll deny it when mom hears this, but he is fine! And that kiss though...that was hot!” she cackled, hitting my shoulder and jostling me in my seat.

I could not bring myself to smile at her joke and indeed, I worried that she’d be telling our mother this episode. Unlike me, Inem was svelte while I took the characteristics of our father’s side of the family, she had no problems getting a man. So, she and my mom were invested in getting me married off or in a relationship that didn’t end in disaster.

“So, was this a onetime thing or is there a future to this?”



And there in lay the quagmire. I could not answer this question and I could not hope for anything.



## CHAPTER SIX

### *Law*

I woke up wanting her.

Therefore, it wasn't surprising that though I had early morning meetings lined up this Friday morning, her office, situated on the opposite side of the complex from mine, was my first stop.

“Good morning, Mr. Ekpo,” Dara’s secretary greeted and for the first time, I offered her a smile, startling the young woman.

“Morning, Helen. Is Miss Umoh in?” my heart soared when she nodded, her eyes widened perhaps, because she was shocked I knew her name. I had to ask my secretary for her name just to have her on my side.

It was important that she be on my side since I’ll probably need her help in wooing Dara. Her attitude last night had shown how untrusting she was of me and I didn’t blame her. To me, she was smart to suspect my motives except, I could not run away from my emotions anymore.

I have not figured out how I'd assuage Uncle Jerome, if it's even possible to not marry Clara but still have a chance at the Chairman seat, but staying away from Dara after last night, was also impossible.

“Please, could you hold her calls and appointments for a few minutes; I need to talk to your boss.”

“Uh...” her hand went to the intercom, probably to inform Dara that I was coming in but I held her wrist, shaking it playfully with a grin, “No need for that, Helen, thank you.”



Sue me, I'm not above using my charms to get what I want. I've heard rumours that the female population of the Ekpo complex believed I was the hottest man in the building. I'd always wondered if Dara thought so too, but it was apparent that her secretary believed I was handsome; I was looking at the effect of my smile on her – speechlessness.

I covered the few steps that would lead me to Dara's office and opened her door without knocking. Her head rose with a furrowed brow and then her eyes widened when she saw me.

Her gasp was audible, "What...uh, I don't recall having any appointment with you today," she stammered from behind the two, large desktop computers on her table.

She was easily the most beautiful woman to me and I wanted her.

My eyes crinkled in my wide smile, "No, Dara, you don't have any appointments with me. I just came to say good morning to you."

Her scoff is loud as she attempted rolling her eyes but gave up at the last minute, "Our phones are working, you know, if you really had to wish me a good morning."

I chuckled at her sarcasm but did not stop my dogged movement to her desk and around it until I stood beside her. I glimpsed a pulse at the base of her throat – excitement or fear, I could barely decide. All I wanted was to feel her lips against mine again. I'm obsessed with it after last night.

My hands bracketed her with one on the back of her seat and the other on the table. "But then I'd not be able to do this," I murmured just before grabbed her lips in a kiss I'd intended to be soft and sweet but that was quickly morphing into hard, insistent and had the probably of ending



with me turning her over on her desk and fucking that precious arse like I'm dying to.

Despite her bristling protest and sarcasm, she gave into the kiss the moment my mouth brushed over her painted lips.

I had to breathe roughly through my nose to keep my mouth latched on hers. I didn't want to miss a beat because I had to breathe. Yet, my need for her increased by the moment; my hands left their former position and grabbed her arms, pulling her from her swivel chair to my unyielding body; I just needed to feel all of her.

Today she had on a flare dress that draped over all her curves. My right hand caressed down and wrapped round her waist to hold her close. The smooth texture of her dress, the sweetness of her mouth, the softness of her body against mine and the consciousness I couldn't go all the way with her here and right now, complicated this simple kiss.

A moan erupted from my throat when her arms swooped round my neck, her nails softly scraping my head. Damn, I was so hard right now, I wanted to fuck her; the woman, her scent and body was making me mad.

“Good morning, sweet Dara,” I growled after doing one of the hardest things I've ever done – pulling away from her succulent lips.

I grinned, enjoying that she was as affected as I was. Good, I wasn't in this alone. She might suspect my motives and generally distrust me but the end game was to make her mine.

“Uh...” I grinned again, loving her flustered and speechless look, my gaze lowered to her swollen lips, pride rushing through my chest for having put that dazed, ravished look on her.





I used my fingers to swipe off the smudge of lipstick on her beak and shyly, she pointed out that I had some too around my mouth.

If it wouldn't seem like I was having a psychological breakdown, a sure threat to my career dreams, I'd carry that smudge around the whole day, proud to tell anyone who wanted to know that it was my reward for kissing my woman.

“Did you come with a makeup kit?”

Her startled eyes found mine – fuck, she's so beautiful. She scanned my face to know what I was thinking, then she nodded.

“Good, make sure to fix your lipstick,” then I leaned in for another kiss, just one more time for the road. “Have a nice day, Dara,” I said and walked away with my fingers wiping off the smudge.

Now I could start my day.

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*Law*

It's weird how one encounter could change a person's outlook on life and things once considered important.

Usually, my mind is 70% work, ways to please Uncle Jerome because hard work and profit margins alone will not get me that Chairman seat on the board and that included keeping Clara happy.

You wouldn't believe it but the spoilt brat never hesitated to report any of our spats to her dad who'd in turn reach out to Uncle Jerome with the words ‘Is this how he will treat her when they're married?’



Manipulative, I know, but my uncle is stuck on the merger being the best thing for Ekpo’s Conglomerate and therefore was determined to please Mr. James and his spoilt daughter.

However, after last night, I’ve not bothered on thoughts on how to please Clara or my uncle, but, there are several crazy ideas swirling in the periphery of my mind that could be alternatives for the merger.

It would involve a lot of research, long meetings out of state, faith in myself and grit to even suggest it to Uncle Jerome. Moreover, in all of these thoughts, Dara wasn’t far off, thoughts of her kept me mellow and unstressed while I worked.

Nevertheless, like everyday life, interruptions were inevitable.

“Excuse me, Ma; you can’t go in there without...” Agnes, my secretary, sounded agitated on the other side of my closed door, just before it flew open and banged hard on the wall.

“Are you for real? You asked your secretary not to let me into your office?”

I didn’t spare the fair complexioned, five foot nothing riot a glance.

“I did tell my secretary I didn’t want to be disturbed,” I opened a file as calmly as I could manage without seeming deliberate.

“So, I’m a disturbance now, uh?”

“If the shoe fits, Clara.”

“Why are you being dramatic? I told you, yesterday meant nothing!”

I flipped a page in the file and furrowed my brow in concentration.

“Seriously, now you’re going to ignore me?”



“Is there a reason you dropped by?”

“You can’t tell me you’ve never cheated on me,” she waved her brightly painted, long nails at me with a scoff in her tone.

I've never cheated on her. I didn't have feelings for her, but my ambition is serious and a romp wasn't a risk worth taking to lose out. “Foolish me,” I raised my eyes to hers and caught a flash of guilt before returning to the file.

“Yeah well, I said I'm sorry. But it isn't enough reason to want to take revenge by schmoozing with that fat-fuck Dara!”

I managed to keep my face neutral while wondering how she knew. My heart hammered in trepidation, not for myself but for Dara. If there's one thing I knew about Clara, she was a vindictive little bitch and it didn't matter if she wronged you first. Additionally, she has hated Dara for the longest time.

“It will be in your best interest to report yourself and what you did yesterday to your father and my uncle better hear about it too, as usual.”

“Seriously, you would make me do that? I mean, you know what's at stake here and...”

“You should have thought of that before spreading your legs in the board room. You have two weeks to figure out how to tell your dad about your indiscretion, until then, I will, in your words, schmooze with whomever I please.”

“Seriously...”



“Agnes!” I barked into my intercom and my secretary flew to my door, instinctively knowing what I needed. “Please, see Miss James out,” I requested quite politely.

Of course, Clara would rather die than allow my secretary even open her mouth as per my directive. She huffed, twisted on her impossibly high heels and flounced out of my office.

“Thank you, Agnes.”

“You’re welcome, Sir,” I could hear glee in my secretary’s tone. I’d always known nobody liked Clara. I also knew Agnes had heard our conversation, it meant it would spread through the company in no time.

I should be angry at that possibility, maybe; just maybe, it would work in my interest instead.

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*Law*

It’s been a week of stealing kisses from Dara.

I say stealing because she’s never willing until our lips touched and then she’d become the passionate woman I’d fucked at my house.

With a groan, I shutdown my computer leaving my office in semi darkness with the security light from the parking lot illuminating through my window. Agnes had left at the close of work by 5 pm, two hours ago. Having had some issues to tackle, I’d stayed back late.

Unconsciously, my hand pressed on my instant erection at the thought of that night. A needy groan erupted from my throat; damn, I’ve wanted her



drastically and the stolen kisses weren't enough for shit, rather, they stoked my desire for her to a desperate level.

Dara has grown overly conscious since that night. Yes, she couldn't resist my kisses, but any suggestion of going out, mostly dinner since our work barely gave us time, was shut down before I even completed the sentence; how the hell do I coax her to my house then for a repeat of that night? I seriously believed a repeat would loosen her up and I'd have the opportunity to tell her this wasn't a casual romp – I might even be in love with her.

A sigh of frustration left my mouth as I packed my laptop into a bag, some files with it too before I slung the zipped bag on my shoulder, my suit lay over my arm and phones in my pocket as I locked my office.

I head to the lift but I unconsciously looked across the complex as I've been doing since giving into my emotions for Dara. So, colour me pleasantly shocked when after weeks of looking over there to catch a glimpse of her, I find the light in her office on, meaning she was also working late.

My steps faltered and made the turn that would lead me to her office. The other offices were dark and locked up for the night. I'm worried for her, I mean, the parking lot isn't the safest place for a lady, but my subconscious scoffed at my thoughts, reminding me that we had security, both digital and physical and there'd been no incident of anyone getting mugged.

I'm forced to confront my real intention, the one that came with the hammering of my heart and racing of my pulse as I neared her office. Now I could kiss her without fear of interruption, now, my breath



hitched as I imagined bending her over her desk. Fuck, my arousal is instant and hard.

I took a deep breath to foster control over my unbridled reaction to this woman before opening her office, as usual this past week, without knocking and startling her to her feet.

“Hey, Dara,” was my greeting as I dropped my bag on the seat in front of her desk.

“Law, what...” I loved it when she called my name in that breathy voice. It reminded me of her awesome response to my touches when I'd had her in my bed.

Her query is incomplete because I've rounded the desk to where she stood and grabbed her face in a kiss she immediately melted into, sighing and allowing me entrance through her pliant lips to plunder and give both of us pleasure.

“Why are you working late?” I croaked, breathing deep to control my ranging arousal, though that proved difficult since I'd just inhaled her alluring scent, the one that drove me wild all the time.

“Umm...” she was still trying to recover from our kiss, so I grinned at her, turning my head to stare at her computer screen.

My eyes widened when I saw Mercer Incorporated as header of the file she'd been working on. I turned my stunned eyes to her, my grin widening.

“Well, Miss Umoh, let me congratulate you for taking this year's win.”

Dara docked her head shyly, “It's just June, you still have a lot of months before year's end to come up with something.”



“Not with you having the Mercer Inc account, I cannot beat that,” unless, an idea bloomed in my mind and I quickly filed it away to analyse later.

“Yet, you won last year at the nick of time,” her large eyes bore into mine, and guilt like never before bulldozed from my stomach straight into my throat.

“About that,” I wrapped my arms around her waist knowing this confession would likely involve her pushing me away, so, I was insuring my hold on her, because, I still wanted more kisses and me telling her about Clara’s duplicity was part of an overall plan I was working on.

“I had help.”

“What?” like I’d expected, her palms flattened on my chest, ready to shove me off. “What do you mean you had help?” her frown was adorable and her fidgeting to get out of my hold was rather bludgeoning my erection.

“A day after the board meeting, Clara told me she switched some of your numbers to mine, nothing readily noticeable but enough to get me a win by a slim margin.”

In the silence that followed, my heart is pounding, hers too, but she doesn’t look at me and that makes me nervous.

“And...and you just took it without saying anything to the board?” she narrowed her gaze on me and I felt like the worst person alive.

“I’m sorry, Dara. I was blinded and motivated by my ambition.”

“But...” she sniffled and I wanted to go down on my knees and beg for her forgiveness. “You’re still ambitious now,” she pointed out.



I leaned down and did the instinctive thing in that moment; I kissed away her tears, murmuring my apology into her ear, while tightening my hold on her. She stood stiffly in the circle of my arms until she took a deep breath and sagged against me when she breathed out.

“I’m still ambitious, Dara but never to your detriment anymore. I’m confessing this to you because I plan to tell my uncle about it.”

“Then what, Law? I mean, what the hell are we even doing, kissing and...what about Clara and the Chairman seat?” her eyes searched mine as she breathed hard, waiting for my reply.

I had a plan for all of that, but I had no idea if it would work. I looked at her squarely and I answered her, “I don’t want Clara...I want you.”

Her breath hitched and I used that moment to take my price, another fierce taste of her lips.

It was supposed to be one of those long kisses that I withdrew from before it went too far seeing as we were at the office. The plan had been to guilt trip her for a drink, maybe suggest we go to my house; I want this woman so much I’m considering letting her in on my alternative plans.

But that’s not how I work. I didn’t become successful by allowing my emotions rule me. Except, right now, my emotions have taken over because I have nothing else to blame for my actions.

I’m possessed and Dara must be too because the simple kiss had turned into incomparable passion, one I could not recall being this intense when she’d been in my house.





One minute we were kissing and moaning into each other's mouths and the next my hands were under her dress and she was tearing open my shirt. How I got her to the side of her desk, had her seated on the edge with her legs spread is beyond me.

“I want you, Dara, so much, my week has been bleak. I thought the kisses would be enough but...” she grabbed my mouth in a fierce kiss, knocking my heart into my stomach as the pleasure pricked the entire surface of my skin.

Her hands caressed my bare chest and pinched my nipples, eliciting a hiss from me and galvanizing me into pulling off her undies and equally dropping my pants.

She moaned at the sight of my standing cock, it was so hard I had to rub it as though to pet it into control while she stared with blatant desire in her eyes, mirroring exactly how I felt in that moment.

“I want you, Dara,” I knew I'd said this before but I really wanted her to believe me. “Do you...want me too?”

Dara licked her lips, her eyes never leaving the movement of my hand up and down the length of my cock, “Unfortunately, yes, I want you!”

Wait, what...why did she say unfortunately? I want to ask her this but she reached down and grabbed my cock, rubbing the length and sending my head dropping backward, my hips undulating and the question flying off my mind.

Then in a blur of frantic moves, I groaned as I bridged her dripping entrance. Her whimpers were so loud I leaned in and kissed her while plunging into her at a desperate pace that would have me coming in seconds and I didn't want that.



Pausing my movements, I pulled her to the edge of her desk, she gasped, her moan a keening sound because the movement pushed me deeper into her sweetness. I bit my lower lip to control my groan, my hands caressed her smooth thighs, my lips returned to latch on hers, swallowing her moans and pants.

Then I kissed down her cheek, loving the soft smoothness of her skin, inhaling her scent when I got to her neck, kissing down to the top of her luscious breasts, which got me going crazy.

I pulled down the neck of her dress, shifting the cups of her bra to spill the glorious globs into my hands. I massaged, squeezed and pinched her nipples, my hips moving slowly, pushing and withdrawing my cock in her clenching channel.

Fuck, my blood is singing with pleasure. I could not recall enjoying sex this much and wanting it to last beyond mere satisfaction. I wanted her in my bed. I wanted to hold her after fucking her and then fuck her again when we'd collected our breaths. I wanted her in my life.

I raised her breasts and proceeded to feed on the swollen nipples, one after the other while my pace quickened. Fuck, she was so wet. Every time I slammed into her cunt, I could feel sprinkles of her juices on my thighs. It all added to the overall feeling of euphoria from being inside her.

“I didn't feel your pussy before I entered you,” I said this withdrawing from the clutch of her wetness, ignoring her protests, I slid my fingers into her, groaning at how wet she was and curved upward to rub her G-spot.



Dara arched on the desk, her arse rising to meet the thrusts of my fingers. Her moans seemed close to crying as she gasped, sputtering words that I interpreted as her need for my cock and I gladly gave it to her.

However, not before I pulled out my fingers covered in her cream and sucked them clean, loving that her eyes heated at my action and my tongue revelled in her decadent taste. I wanted more but my baby needed my weeping cock in her and I needed to be inside her too.

So, I plunged in again, this time my fingers settled on her clit, rubbing gently but firmly as I slammed furiously into her. It took seconds to drive both of us up the hill of pleasure, then her pants became erratic, her pussy clutching my cock to a point of strangling it.

I was in time to latch my mouth on hers, swallowing her unbridled scream as she orgasmed, her wide hips thrashing on the desk, papers flying to the ground as I rode her climax, building on it to get to mine.

The sight of her ecstasy went to my head, my body trembled as I tried to keep a rhythmic pace but the pleasure slamming my system wouldn't allow that. My movements became uncoordinated. It was my turn to grunt and groan, ignoring the possibility of discovery. I only focused on the intoxication of her wet pussy wall clutching me for every thrust.

It felt like I had sparking wires in my brain. It felt like the pleasure built right from my feet like a billow of thick smoke, steadily climbing and gaining volume until it was too much to contain in my body, then it exploded into a cascade of pinpricks that had me biting down on Dara's shoulder as I rode off my climax.



We were both panting with my head on her shoulder and my hands on her hips. I'm still buried in her, jerking from the twitches in her pussy while waiting for the static in my ears to clear.

“Come home with...”

A clattering sound came from somewhere in the building. It could have been two stories down or down the corridor from her office.

Nevertheless, since the complex was empty of workers with no hum of conversation, every noise carried. I only hoped we'd been silent enough, in case there was someone else working as late as us.

The sound spooked Dara and she pushed me off, eliciting a groan from me as I withdrew from her tightness. Her lower lip is between her teeth, so I knew she felt that too. She rearranged her dress without looking at me.

I've never seen anyone pack up so quickly. She had her computer shut down, closed files and dropped them in her drawer, locking that and dropping personal effects in her large purse while I tucked in my shirt in my pants.

“Dara...breathe,” I'm holding her to keep her in place but she refused to look at me.

“Did you do this on purpose to discredit me in front of your uncle?”

“What? No, why would I do that?” I had to bite my tongue from declaring my love for her.

She's close to tears again, “I don't know...I don't know what to think. What if someone saw us...heard us?” she pulled from my hold because I couldn't answer her. This was on me. I'd made this mistake. I shouldn't



have allowed our emotions to run amok, I should have controlled myself.

I followed her out of the office. We rode the lift in silence. When we walked into the lobby, the security guard told us his colleague had just been up there doing a last check before handing over.

The question was – had he heard us?

Dara stiffened beside me and walked off quickly after wishing the security man a good night. It appeared she had the same worries. Fuck, why couldn't I have controlled myself? I wasn't worried for me but for her. Situations like this, if discovered, were a lot harder on the woman than the man. Moreover, it appeared I wasn't any better than Clara. I'd just fucked at the office and I didn't regret it.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *Dara*

I missed him.

I knew I shouldn't but I did. That's the reality of my life right now.

I missed the morning kisses, I missed the gifts he sent to my office every day. I recalled one he'd brought by himself, a pack of foreign chocolate balls. He'd insisted I eat one in front of him and I'd unconsciously moaned as the ball melted in my mouth.

Law had leaned down and whispered in my ear that that was how he'd felt when he'd had his tongue in my pussy.

The mere thought of that far away episode, recalling his warm breath on my neck, the growl of his voice in my ear, always had me twisting on my seat and pressing my thighs together to curb the ache in my pussy.

After that night, where I'd blotted my shame and self preservation, lost my common sense to emotions and had sex in the office, things have not been the same again.

I'd avoided Law. I made Helen return his gifts, I refused to see him unless it was a general meeting at the board room, in which case he kept staring at me, making it difficult for me to reciprocate the act.

A week later, the gifts stopped coming and I sighed in relief even though my heart was breaking. It took two weeks from that night to let go of the scare of almost being caught in flagrante delicto. Then I heard that Law had travelled and then I started feeling guilty for avoiding him and rejecting his gifts.



It's just that Clara wouldn't stop telling everyone at the office that wedding plans for her and Law were in full swing and that it would be announced after the engagement party which Jerome Ekpo was throwing for his first daughter.

Speaking of which, an email notification sounded on my computer, breaking into my thoughts and I leaned in to read it. I sat up straight when I saw it was from Jerome Ekpo.

My heart hammered as I opened the mail and read. I sighed in relief when I discovered it was an invite to the engagement party and Mrs. Ekpo, copying all executives, Law included, had sent the email. It was weird that even the sight of his name got shivers shooting in my body and warming my blood.

Three weeks later, I could not believe I'd had sex in the office, on my desk. Of course, the sight of my desk reminded me of the raunchy episode all the time. I have no idea how I could have lost my head like that; very unlike my sensible self. Lawrence Ekpo was bad for me and it was a good thing he had left me alone.

Now, I needed to figure out how to call Jerome Ekpo's wife and politely make excuses and regrets for not attending their daughter's engagement party, an event which would span a whole weekend with the invited staff lodging at their hinterland estate – the location of the event.

Should it be a sick relative, if so, which relative would it be? It had to be someone close like my mom. I shook my head, rejecting the idea. I was too Christian to lie using my mom and sickness, I believed too much in the power of the tongue.



Maybe I could travel for a vague cousin's wedding at Abuja. I nodded, that should work. Except, I'm jittery because the real reason for staying away from this event was to keep avoiding Law, even though he wasn't in the state, I knew he wouldn't miss his cousin's engagement party.

It felt like forever since I'd seen him and my longing had become a physical gnawing ache in my stomach. Could it be the cause of the nauseousness I'd experienced these past few days? My sister thought I needed to purge my bowels after bingeing this past week on Pringles and pizza. I agree with her, I really needed to detoxify.

Another reason I was jittery was that Mrs. Ekpo is my mentor. She'd groomed me as an intern, up to when I'd taken over as MD Pearl Advertising, a seat she'd once occupied before she'd retired to run a business separate from her husband's. I respected the woman and admired her immensely, so, lying to her would be difficult but I had to try.

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### *Law*

“Come in, son,” Jerome Ekpo said amiably and my heart stuttered, apprehension slithering up my spine as I settled in the seat opposite his desk.

I'd been summoned to his home and we were in his study now, having just finished the lunch Aunty Jane had insisted I have before speaking with my uncle.

“I'm going to go straight to the point. Whatever you have with Idara Umoh has to end. You need to concentrate with Clara, this merger is really important.”





I took a moment to control my breathing and rapid pulse. I'd known from the tone of my uncle's call that this meeting wouldn't be pleasant. It'd been an inkling and it'd turned out right.

“Clara cheated on me. Didn't Mr. James tell you that?” I asked calmly. To engage in any argument with my uncle with the hope of not losing entirely, one had to react with calm reason, since the man's mode of attack depended on shocking and keeping you off balance.

He sighed and finally lifted his gaze from his laptop to look at me, “Yes, he did. It was a mistake; a little indiscretion I believe you can overlook. See, Lawrence, you need to appreciate the importance of this merger and how we need to set our priorities right.”

By *our* priorities? He meant my priorities since I was the one being groomed for an unhappy marriage.

That had been over two weeks ago, the same time Dara had broken any kind of personal communication with me. I'd felt like an orphan when she'd returned my gifts, would not let me in her office, avoided my gaze during meetings and just plain created a canyon between us.

I'd been tempted to tell my uncle there was no need to end anything since Dara had ended it. However, to make his will the law, he'd threatened to demote Dara and the only way that could be avoided was me ending things with her and concentrating on Clara.

The manipulative man knew I wanted that Chairman seat and even though he'd not mentioned it, it was implied that I'd lose that too if I didn't *set my priorities right*.



An argument had ensued. I acknowledge I'd lost my cool, furious that Clara had messed up with impunity and Dara was being threatened for nothing but being brilliant.

It had turned into a shouting match that my aunty had to break up. She'd sent her husband to the room and had requested I tell her what had happened. I did, even confessing I was in love in Dara, had always been from the first moment. I told her I'd stayed away from her because I honoured the agreement of the merger and the relationship with Clara despite it being arranged. I'd ignored my feelings for Dara until Clara had messed up and destiny had stepped in. It could only have been fate that I'd decided to be alone that night and had chosen the same bar she'd chosen.

I'd been agitated and angry at my uncle but when my aunty asked me to give him some time to think, I'd slammed out of the house. Not because I had agreed with Aunty Jane who knew her husband would not change his mind, but because I too needed time to figure out a way from this fucked up maze I'd found myself.

Would it be giving up my ambition to chase love? Was it worth it? Did Dara even feel the same way about me? The last question scared me more and I'd decided that I'd not go down without a fight – both for love and ambition.

“Mr. Ekpo, Mr. Mercer will see you now,” the pretty secretary who wouldn't stop tracing her gaze up and down my body said, breaking into my thoughts.

“Excuse me?” I must have heard wrong. “I thought I was meeting with Mr. Jubril?” a frown marred my brow as I got to my feet, my heart



hammering as it occurred to me I'd be speaking with the owner of Mercer Inc.

“Not after your proposal was read, Sir. Please, this way,” she said and I followed her down the hall that ended at a double door office. She knocked once, opened to let me in before closing herself out.

I have no time to admire the opulence of this office, one that didn't mean much if their accounts were suffering a deficit.

“Please sit,” the wizened old man directed, his bifocals sitting on his long nose while he read the file jacket having the proposal I'd bled over.

“Thank you, Sir.”

It didn't matter that my proposal was offering salvation for Mercer Inc. How they'd even managed to survive this long was a miracle – a miracle they'd tried to stretch by seeking new advertising avenues, which was why Dara had been able to get their account.

After that awesome and terrible night, awesome for the explosive lovemaking, terrible for what came after, I'd thrown myself into researching Mercer Inc. Using my Private Investigator – the business kind, to find out the well kept secret of Mercer Inc; the company was running on past glory.

I didn't come here to embarrass them, rather, I was seeking salvation. If they agreed the terms in my proposal, they'd be able to pay their debts while expanding the Ekpo Conglomerate holdings, exploding their worth, a deal better than what Mr. James was offering. Mercer Inc held more influence and the news of such a merger in the business world would leave competitors struggling to keep up.



“Young man, can you guarantee 30% after the merger?”

Mr. James had agreed on 22%, but with the clout of Mercer Inc, I’m pretty sure my business oriented uncle will seize this opportunity to grasp the pageantry that came with merging with Mercer Inc.

So, I nodded confidently, “Yes, I can.”

The old man nodded, sighing wearily, “The deal is yours, all you have to do is convince your boss.”

We shook hands and I walked out of there already booking my flight back to Akwa Ibom State while strategising how to convince my uncle. I didn’t think it would be difficult but I've worked with my uncle too long to assume anything is easy.

I'd allow him enjoy his daughter’s engagement party first. I too needed to unwind after the too long travel. Moreover, the idea of unwinding sent image rolls of fucking Dara looping in my mind. I’ve missed her terribly and looked forward to seeing her and telling her she couldn’t push me away that easily.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Dara*

Mrs. Jane Ekpo had blatantly laughed at my attempt to dodge her event. I didn't know why it'd been funny to her but I was grateful she'd not been pissed with me.

I'd ended up sending the excuse through a text message and she'd called me immediately to ask for details, which, I'd failed woefully to provide amidst stuttering.

“See you there, Dara dear,” she'd declared before ending the call.

The only good thing about this was the fact that the party wasn't weekend long anymore and guests would be free to leave Sunday morning. Additionally, Law was still not back from his journey, I pray he's held up until my departure on Sunday.

I sighed tiredly, having left work at three, got home to pack an overnight bag and driven two hours to get to the Ekpo estate at Oruk Anam. I just wanted to have a bath and sleep the night away. I really needed to visit my doctor for a check-up, I've been feeling fatigued lately and visiting the doctor was my way of stopping the habit of self medication.

A groan lodged in my throat when a knock sounded on the door of the lavish room I'd been assigned, by Mrs. Ekpo herself. I dragged my tired body from the bed and opened the door to a domestic staff who announced a fish barbecue hangout at the back of the huge house for dinner.



That gave me a smile. The thought of barbecue with lots of pepper will do me some good. I showered, dressed in yoga pants and a free long top, light makeup and dangling earrings before going downstairs.

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### *Dara*

In retrospect, I wished I had the gift of clairvoyance, then I would have foreseen my evening and I might have done everything in my power to avoid what ensued.

It started out okay. With the help of a domestic staff, I found the backyard, which would have passed for a football field. White tables and chairs were scattered in the space, not placed in any particular order, I perceived the Ekpos were going for a casual atmosphere.

Several barbecue stands had been set up, some of the executive staff of the conglomerate were already seated with drinks and plates of barbecued fish before them. I noticed some family members too and it appeared one just went to the stand for a fish, prepared to personal specification, a domestic staff offered drinks of one's choice and one could sit anywhere – so, that's what I did.

A sigh of pure satisfaction escaped me when I tasted the perfectly prepared fish, not to mention the golden fried yam on the side, or the peppered sauce with slices of tomatoes. I'd settled for apple cider wine, the sparkling non-alcoholic drink complimented my fish and my table had a few people I was acquainted with, so conversation was light and free.

When it's too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true. However, I wasn't thinking that way. Everything was dandy, until Clara



showed up. First, she appeared with her posse from work – yes, she was the kind of person who had a physical following, and they dressed as though for the club.

They chose a table for themselves and all I did was spare them a glance and then continued eating. But, apparently, I should have given them my attention, perhaps this was what pissed Clara, that I'd only looked over at their grand entrance once and then focused on dinner and conversing.

“Seriously, who invited you here, Miss Piggy?”

Not very original but it still hurt all the same. At this point, I wished the engaged couple we were gathered for had made an appearance. I wished our host, Mr. Ekpo and his wife, had made an appearance, I believed it would have served as a deterrent to Clara’s drama.

The executive staff at my table looked at her in shock and one of the men went to defend me, an act of kindness that got him shouted down. From there, everyone else just minded their business – they probably recalled Clara was a wealthy man’s daughter and would not be penalised for causing a ruckus. According to an old movie, I'd once seen ‘*we were lucky to be fed here*’.

A bit of a smile appeared on my lips at the old movie reference and that set off Clara, who, I'd chosen to ignore by the way.

“Look here, you fat-fuck, I know because my man, Lawrence began showing you some attention, you stupidly feel you’ve made it in life. Well, think again, dummy. We had a little lover’s spat, separated for a few days, and he’s a man after all, someone had to take care of his physical needs in my absence,” she sneered and her group of friends snickered.



The whole situation would not have bothered me if it hadn't been in front of staff and some people I didn't know. Her words cut me, slicing my skin as I faced my half-eaten fish. Nausea swirled in the pit of my stomach, but thankfully not strong enough to make an appearance.

Anger simmered in my chest at her words. As for Law's intention for pursuing me, I'd leave it for later analysis, right now I'm wondering what would happen if I slapped this spoilt brat into next week. Honestly, I was close to doing it, my hand itched when I imagined the satisfaction of my palm on her cheek when she started shouting, in my face, – 'leave my man alone. We're getting married soon. Leave my man alone'.

A growl started in my throat, my leg shifted into position to elevate me into standing, but the engaged couple made the decision to appear in that moment. And colour me shocked when Mr. Ekpo's first daughter left the side of her fiancé to approach my table, her dark, beautiful face tight in anger.

“Clara, I take exception to my guest being harassed by you. I do not care for your attitude at all and I will not hesitate to throw you out of here despite our parents' friendship. This is a happy gathering, it's either you curb your venom or get out! You are not important in this event, it will happen with or without your presence!”

Wow. Okay, I have to say I wasn't expecting that. It appeared not everyone in the Ekpo family was enamoured with Miss Clara James. Her heavily made up eyes flitted about in embarrassment, her posse had glasses of drinks covering their faces and acted as though they hadn't been encouraging her.

“Babe, it's fine,” Miss Ekpo's fiancé came to her side, his hand going round her lovingly.





The dark beauty took a deep breath when Clara had settled at her table, her head suitably bowed, and turned to me with a kind smile, one that made me want to cry; she looked like her mother, my mentor, in that moment.

“I apologise for the embarrassment Idara. I hope the fish is to your taste?” she hovered, her eyes glinting with concern.

I had no choice but to nod, “Yes, thank you, everything is fine. And congratulations on your engagement,” I widened my eyes, forcing a wide smile to include her beau.

“Thank you,” they both chorused, greeting the people at my table before they moved to say hi to other guests.

I waited a good ten minutes before I slipped away from the backyard, returning to my room. With a heavy heart, I climbed onto the mattress, sitting with my back against the head of the bed and staring unseeingly at the fluttering blind.

Tears blurred my sight and heat filled my nose. I have no idea why I was crying. Was it from Clara’s words or the fact that I’d been right about Lawrence Ekpo, he’d just been using me for the while?

\*\*\*

*Law*

My engaged cousin’s squeal had me dropping my carryall to grab her in a hug. I was happy for her. Her marriage didn’t have to be arranged, she’d fallen in love with an equally wealthy man’s kid and the guy seemed enamoured with her, his eyes shone pure love as he grinned at her girly antics.



“You made it!”

“Yes, I did. Wouldn’t miss it for anything,” I chuckled and held her away from me to check her out. “You look beautiful as always,” I grinned and reached out to shake her fiancé’s hand, “Congratulations, my man.”

“Thank you,” he grinned, dragging my cousin from my side to his, instantly wrapping his arm around her to anchor her against his body.

The move made my heart melt, indeed, I was happy for my cousin. Their love made me hungry for it, to be in their position and Dara’s image flashed through my mind.

“Man, thank God you’re back. What’s up with your fiancée though? Earlier on, she was harassing one of the guests.”

My brows went up, “My fiancée? I don’t have one.”

“He means Clara,” my cousin sighed, “She went out of her way to embarrass Idara Umoh, saying she snatched you away from her or something. Is this true? If it’s true, I love it, I like Idara, she’s good people.”

I couldn’t even process the fact that my cousin liked Dara. I was stuck on Clara embarrassing her. My heart twisted and anger sliced through, making me march towards the door in a fume, “That stupid bitch!”

“Language, Lawrence! And get back here!” my aunty appeared from a part of the house, a frown marred her brow.

My cousin dragged her husband to-be out of there, leaving me to face the music – the traitor.

“I apologise, aunty. Good evening.”



Aunty Jane gave me a look from the side of her eyes when I got to her, “Mm-hmm, welcome. I didn’t think you’d make it, but it’s good you did. Good trip?” she asked, her expression morphing to the kind one I was used to.

I smiled and nodded, despite the heat of anger in my chest, “Yes, aunty.”

“It’s obvious you came directly from the airport.”

“I did,” I concurred unnecessarily.

“Go take your bath then before finding something to eat. Your uncle is locked up in his study with Mr. James,” she reported wryly, obviously not liking that development. My heart leaped in anxiety, wishing I knew what they were discussing or even walking in there and presenting the offer, I’d secured. However, I rejected the idea immediately; I will stick to my plan of presenting it after the party.

Aunty Jane huffed, “Anyway, your mom is here. And I put her in the room beside yours,” this last part my aunty lowered her voice conspiringly, then she smiled and walked away.

A frown marred my brow as I tried to make sense of her words. I didn’t understand why she would put my mother in a room beside me and then tell me about it, like it’s state secret.

“Sir, I have put your bag in your room.”

“Thank you,” I nodded to the domestic staff before sighing and taking the stairs.

\*\*\*

*Law*



“Ah!” I barked out a sharp laugh in the shower when I realised who my aunt had placed in the room beside me. The dear woman, I thought fondly and dressed in a hurry to go find Dara.

My heart is pounding as I knocked on her door. There’s no response, which is a little disappointing but not unexpected since everyone was downstairs, at the backyard having fun. It would be weird if she was in her room, with no light – I noticed there was no reflection from under the door.

I went downstairs with the intention of finding her and making sure she was okay and hopefully, have a conversation to convince her that she was it for me.

However, when I got to the yard, my mom waylaid me with a plate of barbecued fish and fried yam.

“Good, you’re here, I was going to bring it up to your room,” she gave me a side hug while handing over the plate.

I sighed and hugged her back, “Thanks, mom, but I’m not hungry.”

“You always say that,” she muttered and pulled me to an empty table, the former occupants were probably at the make shift dance floor, enjoying the afro tunes from the DJ. “Sit with your old mother for a while,” she directed and I obeyed.

FYI, my mother is not old. She looks younger at age 54 but she enjoyed pulling the old age crap when she wanted to blackmail information from me. I love her immensely, she’d been my rock since father died and I’d always be hers.

“I hear you’re to take over from your father’s brother when he retires.”



That should have been my first inkling of a weird conversation. My mother has never been interested in my work, and even when I'd told her about Clara being a prerequisite, all she'd asked was if I was happy. Of course, in that time, I was, up until my eyes found Dara.

I nodded, "I hope so, mom," I answered after swallowing a piece of peppered fish I'd been chewing.

"Excuse me, please bring a drink for my son. Which one do you want?" she turned from the domestic staff she'd called to ask me.

"A lager will be fine."

"Bring him a malt," she told the staff and made me chuckle; I wonder why she had even bothered asking.

I spared my short, chubby mother a loving glance, and shook my head before continuing with my meal.

"So," she cleared her throat and shifted closer, reminding me of a conspiring person, or maybe, it was the loud music and she didn't want to shout. "Why have I not heard of this Idara Umoh that is causing a stir?"

As you would guess, I choked on the yam I was chewing, thank God it wasn't the peppered fish, and coughed. My mother calmly passed me the malt and I gulped it while she waited patiently, her expression that of angelic innocence.

She even rubbed my back, "Sorry, you need to eat slowly to avoid choking," she advised as though she didn't know her question about Dara had choked me.

"Who told you about her?" I croaked after I'd gulped the malt.



“Are you in love with her?”

Another coughing fit ensued and this time she slammed her open palm on my back and I instantly told her I was fine.

“Then answer the question.”

Pushy, I guess I got it from her. I looked away from her and sighed, “It’s complicated, mom.”

“I don’t see any complication, you either love her or you don’t.”

And she was right, my heart melted because, truly, I’m in love with Dara. Sitting there with my mom made me realise I’d give up my ambition if necessary to be with her. Besides, my dad had left me a sizeable inheritance; one I could start my own company with, if I pleased.

A smile broke on my face; I leaned down and hugged my mom, “I do love her. Thanks, mom!”

“Anytime,” she smiled as I rushed off to the gathering to find Dara.

My eyes swivelled as it’d been doing even while sitting with my mom. I wondered where she was. Unfortunately, an inebriated Clara found me instead.

“Hey, there, husband to be,” she pawed my chest, trying to plaster her body on me.

I held her away, my brow furrowed, “You’re drunk, Clara, you should go home.”

“And leave you alone with that...” her face twisted into an ugly scowl, “That fat bitch.”



My anger, the one I've been holding at bay since knowing she'd attacked Dara, came to the fore and I let her see it in my eyes, "Don't ever call her that again. As for you, and me, tell your father, we are done! I will not marry a rude, cheating skank like you for all the money in the world!"

A collective gasp made me realise some people had stopped dancing to listen to our argument, it was only then I realised I'd been shouting. No one can blame me, I'm really pissed right now and I need to find Dara.

My heart leaped and lodged in my throat when I discovered that she, indeed, had been in her room with no light. I raced back upstairs and banged on her door.

"Open up, Dara, I know..." my hand tried the handle and I'm pleased the door opened. I slipped in, turned the lock before I waited for my eyes to adjust to the darkness.

However, it wasn't so dark, seeing as light from outside filtered through the window. My eyes adjusted quickly and I found my woman's forlorn form sitting at the head of the bed, close to the edge by the window; it completely broke me to find out she had been crying.



## CHAPTER NINE

### *Dara*

I don't know how long I've sat there but I'd say a long time since the room has grown dark, my arse felt numb and my joints were stiff from not changing position.

I'd heard the first knock and ignored it, but when the second one came in company with Law's voice, my breath hitched and there's was nothing I could do to stop the racing of my pulse.

I should hate the very sound of his voice; yet, the deepness of it had butterflies fluttering in my belly. I grew hot when he walked in, despite seeing only his silhouette. I dreaded when he'd turn on the light, he didn't. I followed his tentative movement, loving his tall leanness as he rounded the foot of the bed and came to sit on the edge, facing me.

“Sweetheart,” he reached out to touch me and I waited until the last minute to pull away, he grabbed my wrist in time and the butterflies became a tornado of flaps.

I could not explain what was wrong with me. My heart and head were giving me serious mixed signals. I'm sure I believed what Clara had said, it made more sense. Yet, I'm recalling how he's treated me since that night at the bar and my head is aching from thinking and analysing every single conversation we've had.

“Baby,” I heard something clatter on the floor and when he climbed into the bed, I realised it was his slippers. “I'm sorry for everything, for Clara, for not being more open or talking about our relationship. I realise we should have talked a whole lot, instead of just...”





All I could say is that I'd missed him and his scent inundated my senses and I lost it again by pulling him to me for a kiss.

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*Law*

“I missed you.”

Dara’s whimper had my head spinning. She did feel the same about me because I missed her too.

“I missed you too, darling, terribly,” I gushed against her succulent lips, the one I'd not been able to stop thinking about since she’d banned me from her office. “You have no idea how much. I have all this packs of chocolate at my office that you returned and the ones I'd bought even though I'd known you weren’t seeing me.”

I allowed my hurt to taint my tone, before I kissed her again. I settled against the woodenhead of the bed and pulled her to sit astride me, our mouths still latched. I allowed my senses soak in her essence. Dara was the oxygen in my oxygen mask; without her, I'd suffocate, like I've been doing this past week.

“Really?” she croaked, her eyes searching mine in the gloom as though she desperately wanted to believe me.

I nodded, hoping she saw the sincerity in my eyes, “Yes, really.”

From there on, our emotions spilled in a frenzy of discarded clothes. Again, I was lost to how she made me feel and ignored the need to talk. I'd missed her, damn it, my cock has been depressed without the clutch of her wetness around it.



“Law, please make me feel better.”

Her whispered plea had me growling. I trembled as I sheathed my weeping dick with a condom, hurrying to make her wish come through and my dream a reality.

When I slid into her warmth, all of me settled, I was home.

She widened her legs for me, sucking me deeper into her body, dragging a groan of pleasure from me. Then as though she aimed to make me mad, she twisted her body on the bed with my length still buried in her pussy, until her front was on the bed.

“Oh!” I gasped when I slipped out, together with a rush of liquid that made a squishy sound that had me almost coming.

“Sorry,” she said in a small voice that was coy.

I grinned in the semi darkness, leaning down to bite her shoulder and drop tiny wet kisses on the expanse of her back, eliciting moans and arched back that made me want to lick her entire body.

Dara rose to her knees, positioning her arse in the air and shook it for good measure.

“Indeed, you want me mad,” I choked, my breath coming in gasps. Her bent over like this has featured in all my sexual fantasies of her. “Sweet Lord, Dara, God created you especially for me,” I hummed as I pushed her upper body until it lay flat on the bed while her generous bottom flared for me.

On their own accord, my hands caressed her smooth arse, loving the little hitches in her breath as I explored, kissing wherever my hands touched. I needed forever to attend to every inch of her.



Like iron to a magnet, my fingers traced down the back of her thigh, then swooped between them to swim in the molten moisture that depicted her sensual pleasure. The heat there stoked the fire in my blood.

A hiss erupted from between my clenched teeth as I felt how drenched she was. “All this for me?”

“Yes,” she gasped and shoved her arse towards me, invariably shoving my fingers into her channel, she moaned and began moving, fucking my fingers and making my cock jealous.

I could come from just fingering her. I could fucking explode from simply having her arse laid bare like this for me.

“Sssh, baby, I want to fuck you with my cock,” I said to her soft protests when I withdrew my fingers, which I sucked clean before guiding my hard beyond believe shaft, to her opening.

I started out slow, enjoying the slurping of our fucking. It added heightened sensual pleasure to the whole experience. It was so erotic, especially, in the dark. And so dirty, the pleasure had me surging to my feet on the bed.

My hands pressed down on her waist, emphasizing the curve of her arse as I plunged powerfully into her dripping cunt. I felt my arse stiffen and squeeze when I thrust. I needed all the force I could muster to bury my long cock to the hilt. I felt her beautiful cunt clench and clutch when I wanted to withdraw, like she wanted me in there permanently.

I wanted to be in there permanently too. Nevertheless, the friction of thrusts was too damn alluring to stop. Dara’s whimpers increased, her hips moved, meeting all my thrusts with passion, I knew she was close



and it was good, perfect even, because the avalanche building in me was about to explode soon.

Three deep thrusts later, my grunts mingled with her moans as we shivered, orgasming together, both of us grinding against each other as we rode the sweet edge of our climax.

We fell on the bed, I cuddled her to me, my cock still buried in her, and this is how we sleep throughout the night; this is the only way I want to sleep from now on.

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### *Dara*

The first thing I recalled when I became conscious, daylight streaming in through the window, was the burning length of Law's hard cock against the crack of my buttocks.

Moaning and rocking my hips to curb the ache in my pussy, I recalled how he'd lifted my thigh and used the smooth head of that long shaft to seek, find and tease my wet pussy before he shoved in, eliciting breathless moans from me then and now.

He'd held me to him, one arm over my left shoulder, the other on my soft abdomen, which, he later trailed down until he found my clit and stroked while shunting into me from behind.

I didn't take long to come, yet I yearned for a repeat immediately. He'd murmured a 'good morning' that came with tiny, wet kisses and had promised to see me at the party.

The party!



“Shit!” I flew from the bed, pausing to check the time on my phone – 11:36 am, thirty-six minutes late for the party, which had been shifted to eleven so that people who would love to leave afterwards would have ample daylight to drive home.

I cursed under my breath the whole time I rushed through my bath, moisturizing and dressing up. My makeup is once again light. Thank God for braids, all I had to do was let it drape down my back, the purple braids contrasting with the light sky-blue of my trumpet styled dress on nude, low heel sandals.

It was a sensible decision to pack low heels for this event because when I got downstairs, one of the domestic staff directed me down a path to the gazebo. I griped under my breath the entire time I stumbled down that path, wondering why wealthy people couldn't just keep things simple. I mean, if the engagement party had all these protocols, only God knew what the wedding would look like.

When I broke from the narrow path, my steps faltered and my mouth dropped in wonder. It appeared Mr. Ekpo was addicted to space because, this green expanse before me could be two football pitches and the gazebo could comfortably seat a hundred people or more depending on the seat arrangement.

Guests were already seated in the gazebo, a few domestic staff had a separate canopy with a display of food and drinks. As I marched to the open structure, an errant breeze blew the aroma of the food to my nose and my stomach lurched.

Shit, oh shit, the nausea was back. God, why hadn't I cleansed my stomach before travelling down to this estate? My sister would definitely have a fine laugh if I embarrassed myself today and threw up.



With my scented handkerchief under my nose, I took deep breaths while hurrying under the gazebo to find a seat at the back. I smiled at some of my colleagues and scanned the gathering to find Law, he wasn't in that gazebo, so I decided to listen to Mr. Ekpo who had just collected the microphone from the MC.

“Once again, I welcome all of you to my first daughter's engagement party,” I joined in applauding with the rest of the guests. “I'm grateful to see everyone that had been invited, thank you for honouring my invitation, I hope to see all of you at the wedding.”

“Okay, let me apologize for having several changes in the schedules earlier given and for another change that's about to take place,” a chorus of laughter spread through the gathering.

“You see, my darling girl is a simple person and had asked that I don't throw an engagement party. But, you see, I and my wife are old and bored and it's always lovely to break bread with friends for whatever simple occasion,” more laughter ensued. A smile lifted my mouth. The man was funny, but his amiable mien hid a fierce businessperson.

“So, since we are already gathered, there's food and drinks, it is a party. But this is a party that is going to double as a wedding rehearsal. We have all the parties present, even the pastor who'll officiate on that day, so, bear with us as we practice our roles and responsibilities. In that time, servers will provide food and drinks and the entertainment will be complete.”

Laughter and applause erupted as Mr. Ekpo walked out, microphone in hand with his wife, the couple, some young men and women, who I suspected were part of the wedding train.



A DJ I'd not noticed before then, struck up a wedding tune and the wedding party marched from the back, where I was seated, using the aisle which had been demarcated to the front where the pastor stood.

I watched in amusement as they marched in until I saw Law walking in with Clara clinging on his arm like a vine wrapped round a tree trunk, and my smile froze.

They looked good together. She was fair and petite while Law was dark and tall – a perfect pair, complimenting each other. This was all make believe, right? I shouldn't be jealous because this pairing must have been planned a while back. However, a part of my mind reminded me that he'd not made any lasting declarations last night. He'd mentioned we'd talk but we never did.

Perhaps, Law had wanted to offer me a side-chick position, who knew? My heart broke at the thought and bile rose from my belly to my throat, threateningly. Another deep breath and a firm mental snap made me hold back from jumping to conclusion.

With my stomach settled, I wiped out my phone and proceeded to check my mails to avoid the sight of seeing her hands on the man that I love.

My gasp is audible. I was grateful for the cover of the music. Oh God, where did that come from? How didn't I notice I was falling in love with Law? I could not be in love with him; he possibly belonged to someone else. His uncle would cut him off the race for the Chairman seat if he wasn't with Clara. Like she'd mentioned last night, he'd been with me because she was away, you know, cheating on him with someone else, but she was back now and the arrangement would continue as earlier planned.



I scanned the sea of guests unseeingly. What would happen to me now? Would I be able to endure seeing them every day at work?

My stomach heaved when a server passed with a plate of food. My handkerchief flew to my nose again while I tried to swallow down the chunk. Then as though Mr. Ekpo wanted to spite me, his voice came over the microphone and he laughingly announced that his family was going to be experiencing a train of weddings since his nephew, who was like a son to him, was engaged to his best friend's daughter.

Raucous applause broke out, the sound echoing in my ears as though I was hearing it from the end of a tunnel. I could taste vomit in my throat when I looked up and found Clara standing on tiptoes to kiss Law. I shut my eyes from the sight, shoved off my seat and hurried outside.

I only had a few seconds to find the nearest bush and the only available one was the path I'd used to get here, so I rushed down there, pulled my handkerchief off and vomited into a bed of flowers.

Pressing my knees together, I tried to control the need to urinate, the tingling urge forced out by my heaving. My braids dangled down my face and I couldn't hold them off because I held my purse and phone in one hand and the other shifted my dress out of harm's way.

Muscles in my stomach clenched and released as I heaved, spitting out green bile now after emptying the food from last night out of my stomach. Suddenly though, I felt my braids being pulled from my face to my back.

“There, there, sorry dear, lift your head and try to breathe in fresh air,” I'm startled at the feminine voice but I did what it said, before turning to a short, dark, chubby woman who handed me a bottle of water.





How did he know to bring me water? The question must reflect in the widening of my eyes as I collected the plastic bottle and broke the seal.

She smiled at me, her eyes wrinkling at the corner and a vague resemblance registering but I couldn't figure out where I'd met her.

“Thank you,” I croaked after rinsing my mouth and spitting out the water several times. “I'm sorry, do I know you and how did you know to bring me water?”

“I'm Mrs. Mary Ekpo, mother to the man you're obviously in love with.”

I swear, my eyes were so bulgy right now, I'm afraid they may fall off their sockets. So many words rushed to my throat but got stuck there.

She chuckled at my shock and then quietly led me up the path, back to the house.



## CHAPTER TEN

### *Law*

I was tempted to cry out as I struggled, desperately, to, not just untangle my poor arm from Clara's grip but to escape from all the people who felt it necessary to shake my hand in offering their congratulations.

A glance at my uncle showed his smug look, he'd gone and played his hand. Even Clara's father had the same expression. This had been planned, an ambush. Did they think because they'd announced the nuptials to a crowd of people that I'd succumb to their stupid wishes?

They had another thing coming.

My heart is pounding as I checked where I'd spied Dara sitting and she wasn't there. Fuck, what must she be thinking? I knew what I would be thinking if I was in her shoes and it just broke my heart. I had to do something...something desperate.

The whole event had turned into a circus after my uncle's announcement. I looked up and luckily my uncle stood close, discussing with his dear friend Mr. James while the microphone dangled from his hand, close to me.

When I reached up, snatched it from his grasp and clicked on the frequency, I'd wished Dara was still close by to hear what I had to say, before I demanded everyone's attention. It was beautiful to see how the hall went silent at my behest.

"I feel overwhelmed at the well wishes from everyone here today, and I also regret to I announce that I cannot, and will not marry Clara James," murmurs erupted in the hall, but I had to say my piece, "I am not in love



with her, I am in love with Idara Umoh. I apologise for the misunderstanding, thank you.”

You can colour me amazed when applause broke from a part of the gazebo on the right side. When I looked, ignoring my uncle’s shouts above me, I noticed it came from my staff from Gem Advertising and some from Pearl too.

I grinned at their cheers, dropped the mic and rushed out to find Dara.

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*Dara*

I've not be able to say anything since Law’s mom introduced herself. My amazement increased when she led me to her room instead of sitting in a central place at the house.

I was jittery. I felt like she might judge me for being in love with another woman’s fiancé, but her next question took me by surprise.

“When did your nausea start?” her eyes bore into mine with a knowing glint; I have no idea what she’s about.

“Umm...it’s been weeks. I'd meant to take a purgative seeing as I'd eaten too many junk foods recently but my work never gave me the time.”

“Hmm,” she sat down by me on the bed that was a replica of mine on the second floor of the house. “You ever considered that you might be pregnant?”

Breath was knocked out of me at the preposterous suggestion. I even managed a scoff and chuckle to show the older woman that she was far from the truth; Law had used the condoms the whole time. Well, except



early this morning, shit, but that wouldn't make me pregnant, I just had to get to some morning after pills as soon as possible.

“When last did you have your menstruation?”

There was a hazard alarm ringing in my head when I scanned my memory and realised that in the midst of emotional upheaval, my investment in avoiding Law, work and the weird fatigue I'd been feeling, I'd failed to notice my lack of menstrual cycle.

“Jesus,” I muttered.

Mrs. Ekpo chuckled, “You might be pregnant, my dear.”

Law bursted into the room at that moment, his amazed eyes found my shocked ones, “You're pregnant?”

“Umm...” no words came to mind, but his mom had no such holdups.

“It is impossible if you kids had intercourse without protection,” she said this with no shame, giving her son a stern look.

I wanted to jump up and point out that the lack of protection happened only this morning, but Law opened his mouth.

“Oh God, that night at the office!” his hand went to his head and I wished I could faint as that night came back to me. The frantic need to be filled by him, the blinding pleasure. God, I'm shameless because I could feel liquid heat pooling between my legs – I want him even in the face of this disaster.

His mom shook her head in disappointment, “My goodness, Lawrence, at the office? Haven't I raised you better than that?” If I was fair



complexioned, I'd be red with embarrassment. My face is hot and I want to cover them with my hands.

Law ignored his mom and fell on his knees before me, grabbing my thighs to get my attention, what I saw there made my pulse race.

“I wished you'd heard what I said at the gazebo,” he began but the door to the room opened again. Apparently, this was the alternate venue for the party, because Mrs. Jane Ekpo entered with her daughters behind her, all smiling.

“He said he didn't love Clara and would never marry her, he said he was in love with you,” Mrs. Jane Ekpo reported and clapped her hands in obvious enthusiasm.

“It was so romantic, Idara,” the first daughter said and her sisters nodded.

I turned my opened mouth and wide eyes to Law, “You did that...do you mean that?” I asked in a voice so far gone it couldn't even be described as a whisper.

“Yes, Dara, I fell in love with you the very first day I saw you. Why do you think I distanced myself from you, except when we had to work?”

“I thought you hated me like Clara did,” I cried and he pulled me in for a hug.

“I swear, you don't even need to feel the same way, I'll love for both of us, I love all three of us if you accept me as your husband.”

“What? There's a baby?” Mrs. Jane squealed and I vaguely heard Law's mom answering her of the possibility. I knew I was pregnant, now that I recalled the night at the office.



“You don’t need to do it alone because I love you, Lawrence Ekpo, very much!”

So many ‘awws’ came from the onlookers as Law tenderly grabbed my face and kissed me fiercely.

“We might possibly have to look for new jobs,” he said against my lips and I giggled because I didn’t care one bit. “But I’m satisfied as long as you agree to be my wife,” he leaned back and gave me a questioning look.

My grin could light a full hall, “Yes, yes, I’ll marry you.”



## EPILOGUE

*One year later*

They'd not had to find new jobs, Mr. Ekpo had accepted Law's new offer and so far, business was better than good.

Mrs. Jane Ekpo suggested the wedding take place as soon as possible so that Dara's baby-bump would not show. The couple demanded a small wedding. Eight months later, they held their little girl in their hands.

Three years later, Law took over the Chairman seat on the Board while running his own company on the side. Dara, as a matter of marriage, got a seat on the Board too while managing both Pearl and Gem Ad agencies.

From enemies to lovers; Dara and Law laughed over the years about their misconceptions of each other. It made for great conversation whenever they entertained family and friends. Never did they ever imagine they would end up spouses who were desperately in love with each other.

**The End**



