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One night with Ex-husband

Prologue

The energy inside the club was at its peak, and aloof from the crowd stood a woman in the corner, Myra. Dressed in a beige-colored body-hugging dress with bold red lips, she looked nothing less than a seductress. Though petite, there was something about her that was intriguing. She was accompanied by her friend, Sharon, who was doing everything to engross her in mischievous chat about men around, but to no avail. Myra's eyes told everything that she was feeling from inside—sorrow.

"Myra, you have to let him go," Sharon said, interrupting her thoughts.

Sharon observed how Myra was only holding her drink and was lost somewhere.

Giving her signature smile with a glint of sorrow, Myra replied, "He already left me. Can I do anything now?" With that, she drowned her drink in two chugs.

"Woah! Let's go and burn the dance floor!" Myra said, sounding cheerful.

Sharon couldn't help rolling her eyes at her failed attempt.

The in-house DJ was playing the trance. Myra closed her eyes and lost herself in a daze, letting the music slowly fade her sorrow away. With each beat, she felt her mind replaying her past in front of her, and one by one, she was letting it out of her memoir.

Suddenly the music seemed to stop. Loud voices could be heard from somewhere near the bar counter that was designed in such a way it looked like an underground floor rather than a part of the club. Myra opened her eyes and witnessed the same confused expression on her friend's face. When they noticed the crowd gathering towards the railing separating the counter and the dance floor, they immediately walked towards it to see the cause.

Myra heard an angry voice followed by a loud grunt. Her instinct suddenly went on high alert on its own, which seemed to have confused her. She could make out a male voice yelling profusely while hitting someone.

Why do I feel scared all of a sudden? She thought while walking briskly along with her friend.

When she had a clear view, she saw the back of a man crouched down over someone, clutching the collar, and giving a punch one after the other. She felt her eyelids start fluttering like a bad omen. She didn't have time to register when suddenly she heard the man who was hitting roar, "Son of a bitch, you dare! SHE IS MY WIFE!"

She gasped and held her breath as she was too familiar with the voice and the anger behind it. She snapped out of her thoughts when she felt a burning gaze on her, and her black orbs immediately locked with the brown ones.

She couldn't stand on her shaking legs and almost lost her balance when Sharon held her. She, too, had the same horrid expression as Myra.

The rage Myra saw in his eyes made her flinch, and the next moment she ran, she ran to save herself before the promised wrath in those brown eyes could engulf her. Her instinct told her to run, and she obliged without caring about the direction she was going. When she came to her senses, she realized she was in one of the restrooms. One look at her reflection froze her.

She saw the reflection of a trembling woman, her face tear-stained, which she didn't even realize till then. She put her trembling hands over her mouth to stop her whimpers. The neighboring girl gave a sympathetic glance, and Myra quickly averted her gaze, turning the water faucet with her trembling hand. She was startled when she heard someone shrieking.

"Who the fuck are you? This is the women's restroom, you asshole!"

Before Myra could comprehend who shrieked or whom that girl was cursing, her forearm was harshly pulled, and she came across the same angry orbs.

She froze when she realized Abram had followed her inside the restroom.

All she saw was fury in his eyes, scanning her from head to toe, and the scowl deepened, noticing her body-hugging dress. His nostrils were flaring like an angry bull.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" before she could open her mouth, he continued.

"What the hell are you wearing?!" Abram yelled while roughly grabbing her by her arms, making her flinch.

"Please....." she gulped in fear and continued, "Please, you are hurting me."

She didn't know whether she should be happy to see him after two years or if she should be afraid of his anger as before?

Court Room

"Your honor, I would like to bring to your notice that this is the fifth time Mr Abram Ali has not attended the divorce hearing, he deliberately harasses my client Mrs Maira Noor by delaying the hearing", Thomas, Maira's lawyer pleaded.

"I object, my lord. Mr Ali is going through serious health issues which require him to frequent the hospital and stay for treatment", the opposition lawyer argued.

"So my friend Mr Nathan here is saying, since the day he filed for divorce from my client he is either not well or out of the city. My lord, since two years, Mr Ali has neither attended any single court hearing nor he is responding to my client's call where as my client Mrs Maira never missed her appointment though she has a career which also needs her attention to".

"I would state again that Mr Ali is deliberately delaying the session as he doesn't have a valid reason to divorce my client and she can sue him for mental harassment".

"Mr Nathan, this was the last time I am postponing the hearing, the next session I want your client to attend it unless he is on ventilator", the remaining crowd giggled hearing the sarcasm in the judge's words. The courtroom was filled with many new lawyers or interns who wanted to learn the art of debating in the live courtroom.

"Sir, on behalf of my client I request the next hearing to be held after 2 months, till then he would recover and attend the court without fail".

"Request granted, next case hearing shall start after the break", with that the judge adjourns the hearing.

Maira stepped out of the court along with her lawyer.

"Mrs Maira, did you try to talk to your husband again?", Thomas asked while going through the file his assistant has given for review.

"Yes, but now it says the number is invalid. He is not using that number anymore", Maira replied heartbroken realizing there was no way to talk to Abram and it has been more than 2 years since that fateful day.

"Don't worry, this time the judge has given the ultimatum, the case is now in our favor, plus he doesn't have a valid reason for divorce". Thomas assured her in his professional tone.

"Well, thank you so much. I will take your leave now. I need to reach the office", with that Maira parted her way.

Boarding a passing cab, Maira was lost in the past. While she was reminiscing the part a lone tear escaped from her eye.

Why Abram? What did I ever do to you? You left me when I was vulnerable and need you the most, she cried inwards. The cab

driver gave her a sympathetic look through the rear view mirror.

She was brought out of her thoughts when her mother called her.

"No, mamma, again, he didn't come", she quickly hid her sorrow and spoke as if she didn't care.

"God only knows what that boy is up to, he neither talks to you directly nor attend the hearing, it looks like he is punishing you for no reason", she could hear her mother complain the other side of the phone.

"Thomas assured me that the case is in our favor because of his absenteeism". She tried cheering her mother up noticing the sadness behind her voice.

"I always tell you to let us accompany you during the hearing, why don't you let us be with you". Her mother couldn't help but complain.

"Mamma you know how much time it will take for the number to come for the hearing, I can't let you wait for long hours plus, I have to go to the office too from there. I can't let you and Dadda be on your own", Maira lied, knowing how emotional her mother will become once the reality of the courtroom hits her.

Before her mother could retort she immediately interrupted her, "Okay, I have reached office now and need to go. Already I am late then the assigned time, love you, bye". With that, she hung up the call while in reality she was still in the cab.

Letting out a deep sigh, she stared blankly out of the window till she reached her office. It took her nearly an hour to reach the office as the civil courts are located at one corner of the city while her office was in the main commercial area.

"You are late and I am sure that ass again, didn't turn up", Sharon said while rolling her eyes at Maira's face.

Anybody can guess what is going on in her mind and yet she pretends as if it doesn't affect her, Sharon thought.

"Well, we should always look for the good even in bad times, the case is in my favor because he is not attending", Maira said with her signature smile. The unusual part of her smile were her Dracula teeth, which made her smile more charming.

1

"Yes, Mother Teresa, now move your ass as we have a meeting with the boss and later we are going for a party". Seeing that Maira was declining her offer for that party Sharon abruptly interrupted her, "I am not taking no for an answer, either you come willingly or I am abducting you".

"Sharon, you know me and my family, we don't do parties. We are lower middle class, who value their virtue more than anything, remember?". Maira said while flicking Sharon's head.

"There is a reason I call you mother Teresa, you live for others and look where it landed you?", seeing that Maira was hurt by her words, Sharon immediately apologized.

"I am sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you Maira, but you have to learn to live for yourself too. I am concerned about you babe".

"I know you are worried about me, but I can't lie to my family. They trust me and I can't break that trust".

"You are not lying, it's just you are not telling the truth either, plus we are not going to do anything that is wrong. Just hang out and have some fun. You need a break and I will do anything on my part to get you out of your depression".

Sharon was always good at manipulating things and she knows Maira was a kind of person who thinks from her heart rather than her brain.

"I already spoke with your mother and she is okay with you staying with me for tonight. Now the end of the discussion or we will be late for our weekly meet", With that Sharon dragged Maira towards the elevator.

Both worked for a multinational company who provided financing as third parties and also provided services of

customer support to various clientele companies. They worked as business analysts and mainly worked on managing customer data for millions of customers and forecasting future huddles.

"Today's meet agenda is client visit as well as a new assistant vice president will be joining us along with the client. Basically he worked in the US branch, but has now relocated to our Indian branch", Maira's manager Shantanu addressed his team.

"Now I want no mistakes as a business analyst team, their agenda for visiting the Indian branch is to revamp our team with new technology, this client visit is really important for us. One mistake and it will cost the company. So pull up your socks and give your best in the coming month". With that he dismissed the meet.

1

After their office was over, Sharon took Maira for shopping to buy a new dress for the party. Much to her horror, she chose a beige color bodycon dress with net full sleeves, making her fair complexion stand out.

1

"Are you crazy, I am not wearing that dress. You know, short dresses and especially body hugging is big no no for me", Maira said in disbelief. She never expected her best friend not to know her clothing preference.

"Oh, you always dress like an old lady with loose clothes and the place where we are going has a dress code, so go now and try. We have to buy you sandals also". Sharon literally bushed her in the trail room.

You have seen worse in your life and I want to make you forget the shit you went through for that ass, Sharon thought. Going to the party was just an excuse to make her come out of her shell.

The Club

When Maira stepped out of the mall, she already gathered the attention and few even whistled which made her face flushed.

"Do I have to wear this to attend a party? If you told me this condition before I won't have come", Maira said while pulling her dress.

"Oh come on, can't you see how they are gaping at you? You are a treat to watch", Sharon winked while they boarded their cab.

"What are you doing", Sharon shrieked at Maira, who was rubbing off her bold red lipstick.

"Nothing, just lightning it a bit, it looks way too much for me", Maira said while trying to take her hand out of Sharon's grip.

"No, you are not, now stop it already". Sharon said while rolling her eyes.

The energy inside the club was at the peak, however, aloof from the crowd there stood a woman in the corner, MAIRA. Although she was with three of her friends along with Sharon, who were engrossed in their mischievous chat about the men in the club, her eyes tell some other story; sorrow. Dressed in a beige colored body hugging dress with bold red lips, she looked nothing less than a seductress, though petite yet there was something about her that was intriguing.

This was her very first time to wear something that sexy and come to a club and as per Sharon she should do it more often instead of wearing clothes of an old lady.

"I swear, if you don't stop pulling your dress I will give your number to some random guy here", Sharon had to warn her.

1

What if he sees me like this? He won't be happy. Maira was thinking

"Maira, you have to let him go", Sharon interrupted her thoughts.

Sharon observed how Maira was only holding her drink and was lost somewhere. She was her only friend who knew her from their childhood days and have seen her struggle with her marriage and her devil husband; Abram.

Giving her signature smile with a glint of sorrow, Maira replied, "He already left me. Can I do anything now?". With that she drank her drink in one go.

"Woah! Let's go and burn the dance floor", Maira said, sounding cheerful altogether.

Sharon rolled her eyes on her failed attempt.

The in house DJ was playing the trance. Maira, who was lost in her daze, was letting the music slowly fade off her sorrow, with

each beat, she felt her mind replaying her past in front of her and one by one she was letting it out of her memoir.

"Please, listen to me. I can't live without you".

"Don't make me laugh now Maira", he mocked her.

"Abram, I will do anything, just please don't leave me".

"Anything?"

"Yes, anything, please I love you".

"Then abort this baby". He said without remorse.

3

"What, now you don't love me?" he said, staring directly at her shocked expression.

"Either it's me or the baby, you decide".

Suddenly the music seemed to stop and loud voices could be heard somewhere near the bar counter which was designed so as to look like an underground floor below the club. Maira opened her eyes and saw the same confused expression on her friends' faces. When they noticed that the crowd started gathering towards the railing that was separating the counter and the dance floor, they immediately walked towards to see the cause.

Maira could hear an angry voice followed by a wail. She could make out a male voice who was yelling profusely while hitting someone. Her instinct suddenly went on high alert on its own and that seems to have confused her.

Why do I feel scared all of a sudden, she thought while walking briskly along with her friends.

When she had a clear view, she saw the back of a man who was crouched down on someone, clutching the collar and was giving a punch one after the other. She felt her eyelids start fluttering like a bad omen. She didn't have time to register when suddenly she heard the man who was hitting roared, "Son of a bitch, you dare? SHE IS MY WIFE".

She gasped and held her breath as she was too familiar with the voice and the anger behind it. She snapped out of her thoughts when she felt a burning gaze on her and her black orb immediately locked with the brown one.

"I aborted the baby just as you asked me, how can you not be true to your words", Maira was clutching his arms.

7

"I never said, I will not divorce you", he smirked at her and jerked her hand.

That was the last Maira ever saw him.

"ABRAM", she could stop, but whisper his name.

Her knees began to give her up and she felt herself falling, however, Sharon held her. She too had the same horrid expression like Maira.

The rage Maira saw in his eyes made her flinch and the next moment she ran, she ran to save herself before the storm engulfed her. When she came to her senses she realized she was in one of the rest rooms. One look at her reflection froze her.

Why was he here? If he was in the city why didn't he attend the court session today?

What she saw was the reflection of a woman who was trembling violently, her face tear stained which she didn't even realize till now. She put her trembling hands over her mouth to stop her whimpers.

After all these months he still affects me like this, she thought.

Her neighboring girl gave a sympathetic look, however, soon Maira heard her screaming.

"Who the fuck are you? This is the women's restroom, you asshole"

The next second, Maira's forearm was harshly pulled and she came across the same angry orbs.

She froze when she realized Abram followed her inside the restroom.

All she saw was fury in his eyes, which was scanning her and her body hugging dress, his nostrils were flaring like an angry bull.

"What the fuck are you doing here?"

"What the hell are you wearing", Abram yelled while roughly grabbing her by her forearms making her flinch.

"Please.....", she gulped in fear and continued, "please, you are hurting me".

She didn't know whether she should be happy to see him after two years or she should be afraid of his anger as before?.

The women in the restroom started shouting and complaining about the intruder. That was the least concern for Maira as she had bigger issues to solve and the next moment she felt herself being dragged roughly out of the restroom.



The Night

Abram, seeing the commotion inside the restroom, dragged Maira much to her horror. The onlookers were giving them a confused look, as one was leading her out and the other looked at him like a frightened kitten. Maira noticed the stare they were getting and started protesting to get out of his grip.

No matter how much she struggled, his hold on her wrist never loosens and in order to stop him from dragging her, she tried

holding on to the hand rail while they were descending the stairs.

Where is he taking me, she was thinking rapidly.

However, her protest only irked him more and he pinned both her wrist while holding her by her waist, forcing her to walk at his pace. She stumbled due to high heels and also while trying to match his strides. She started looking out for Sharon for help and was petrified with the ongoing event.

Upon reaching his car, he roughly shoves Maira near the passenger door before commanding, "Get in".

She held onto the car to regain her balance and manning all her strength she replied, "No".

I can't let him make me do as he wishes, she mustered up her courage and looked straight into his eyes.

On seeing the glint of reluctance in her eyes, he lost his cool and bang his fist on his car roof. Maira flinched and a tear of fear escaped her eyes while she cupped her mouth with her trembling hand to stop her whimper. She noticed the breaking of the car window with his fist impact.

Satisfied with her reaction to his threat, he opened the car door and she slid in without any protest or question. Maira had no clue where they were heading as she had other pressing matters to think. She was scared at that moment would have

been an understatement. While she was contemplating what was going to happen to her, she failed to notice her destination.

1

She clutched to her seat for the fear of the speed Abram was driving at.

Still the same, still hold to her seat when scared, he thought.

She was brought out of her thoughts when the car came to an abrupt halt and next second she heard the clicking of the seat belt. She was still grasping her surroundings when the door opened and Abram pulled her by her forearm.

She noticed they were in an isolated parking lot of a multi residential apartment with no sign of humans around. Her heart was pounding against her chest and her breathing was uneven due to the effect of her jogging as she was pulled by Abram.

She was looking at his back with fright and next moment she was thrown on the bed. She could only hear her heart beating at an increased rate and his exasperated breathing.

Meanwhile Abram stood at the end of the bed with closed eyes and a restraint face. He took one deep breath to calm his fury and plopped his right knee on the bed. He made Maira face him

with a gentle tug. He knew she was petrified of him with her unmoved posture.

"What were you doing in the club?", Abram asked while holding her gently by her forearm.

Why is he being gentle now? What is he up to? She frowned at him.

On receiving no response from her, he said through gritted teeth, "Maira, we both know the level of my patience, so don't test my patience while I am asking nicely. What and why were you there in this dress?".

She thrust her hand on his chest to make a safe distance between them which earned her a glare from Abram, who was looking at her hand on his chest and then at her for even trying to escape him.

"The last time I checked, I don't owe you any explanation", she said while giving a disdain look.

"Do you even know what that bastard was saying about you? He was planning to take advantage of you and what the fuck you were thinking while doing the dirty moves on the dance floor? Were you out trying to go fuck some random guy? Is that what you became now?". He said with a growl.

"You want me to tell what such women are called? He jerked her.

4

"What I am or I was is none of your concern now. Where were you when I was calling you all these days? Where were you when I begged you to talk to me? Let me guess, you left me". She couldn't control her pain.

Abram's expression changed from fury to blank and taking this as an advantage, she pushed him and got up from the bed.

"You don't have any right to order me or force me to do things I don't want to do. It's my life and I don't owe you any explanation". She said, looking straight into his eyes.

Though she said each word with a tough look to him, but only she knew deep down how scared she was to be alone with him in god knows whose bedroom.

Run, Maira. Get out of here before he does something, her mind encouraged her to walk towards the door.

While she was about to open the door, he heard him say, "oh yeah, I don't have any right on you? Then explain this to me?".

The next second her back hit the door and her lips were caught by his. She was taken aback by his sudden attack and forgot to react, however, when she felt his hand on pulling her zipper down, she came to her senses.

The kiss was dominating and her reluctance was only fueling his dominance. It provokes him to show her, she belongs to him. Though Maira struggled to get out of his grip, she was more petrified with the notion how her body was reacting to his kiss.

2

She was hitting him on his chest, pushing him with all her might but to no avail. His desire took a toll over his sanity and he pinned both her wrists behind her back with one hand and the other he used to hold her neck to deepen the kiss.

She closed her eyes on seeing herself helpless and tears of humiliation started pouring out of her eyes. She felt disgusted when she was slowly giving it up to her desire and kissed him back.

3

Abram wanted to kiss her only to prove he was still her husband, however, when she kissed him back all his senses were gone.

He let go of her only when both were out of breath and were panting. He briefly cupped her face and leaned his forehead on hers with closed eyes.

He was still fighting inside, but when he heard Maira called his name in a sexy tone, he succumbed to his desire. Pulling down

her dress zipper, leaving her only in her inner wears, he carried her towards the bed.

While he was placing her on the bed, Maira started unbuckling his belt and pulling his t-shirt. He again kissed her on her lips while this time it was gentle. In her response she parted her lips, letting him invade every corner of her mouth. She put her arms around his neck and pulled him closer to her, earning a moan from Abram.

Wrapping her legs around his torso, he pulled her up and made her sit on his lap. While his tongue was teasing her reddish earlobe, his hands were sliding over her smooth back. Maira arched her back while moaning. Next second, he started giving wet kisses on her neck and trailing downwards.

She fisted his hair with one hand as his lips were pleasuring her weak spot while with the other hand, she dug her nails over his broad shoulder to control her from screaming his name.

When he was sure that she was prepared, he laid her back on the bed and entered into her. She gasped while clutching the quilt. He stayed like that for some time and let out a moan on feeling the reaction of her body with his invasion.

Gradually he started moving while holding Maira in his arms and kissing her passionately.

Heartbreak

The next day's sun rose with the brightest and coolest rays in sync with the previous night passion shared by two souls. There lies Maira on her stomach, completely naked while her hips and certain areas of her chest covered with a quilt, her hair gliding with the wind over her bare back. A moan escaped her lips and she shivered slightly with the morning's cool breeze making her eyes flustered.

Although her eyes felt heavy to even blink, her other senses were on high alert. She could hear the bird chirping outside the windows, she could smell a familiar masculine cologne, her body covered with goosebumps with the presence of someone familiar and her heart beats rapidly on its own accord.

That's when her brain registered her surroundings and could recollect her last passionate night with someone who wanted to divorce her for unknown reason.

How? When? Why? She mentally slapped herself, but then she couldn't hide the contentment she felt as if she was complete now, she couldn't stop but feel happy again. Why? Why does she feel like falling in love again?

Though her body aches everywhere, but she couldn't be more than happy with the pain.

She opened her eyes and saw Abram standing near the open window, only in his trouser. His back was towards her hence she couldn't make out his expression or his thoughts that moment.

Tucking her loose strand behind her ear, she slowly got up, covering herself with the quilt though she felt shy, knowing well, there was no part of her which he hadn't seen before.

"I see you are still the whore you were back then", his words broke her little dream she just thought of. Maira's breath halts with his words.

He didn't mean that, right? She was staring at his back, but his next sentence made her gasp in despair.

"A desperate woman like you, who can sleep with her ex husband can no wonder whore around any men". He said while turning towards her with no remorse.

Maira felt her world just scattered in front of her and she couldn't do anything to save it. The hurt that welled up in her eyes starts streaming down her cheeks. She started breathing heavily as if his words were choking her and she felt suffocated with his intense glare.

He started walking towards her in a menacing manner and said, "I did the right thing by divorcing you".

He halted and stood near her, while wiping her tears, said, "How much do you charge for a night?", smirking at her teary face.

"Oh, now you can't talk? Last night you were screaming my name like a slut, enjoying every bit of pleasure I was giving. I never knew you were a sex hunger kitten".

She lowered her gaze, seeing the ferocity of disgust he held for her. She clutched the quilt tightly and crawled back. As if the words were not enough to cause her agony, his stare was magnifying the pain. Abram leaned near the bedside drawer and took out something, before saying;

"Here! Take extra 200 bucks for the sake of our old times". He roughly grabs her palm and shovels the currency into her hand.

With that, something broke inside her. Maira was literally panting while her trembling hands were tightly holding the quilt. After he tricked her for an abortion, she vowed never to cry in front of her husband, but what he said just now shattered her soul beyond repair. Her quivering body and hollow eyes didn't hide the agony she felt at that very moment. "I am sorry for everything", she said with a shaky voice.

"Do I look like I care for your apology? I am going to the bathroom and before I am back, I don't want to see your face. Get out".

After slamming the bathroom door loudly, Abram walked towards the sink. Till now, he was controlling his fury.

How can I lose control? How can I make love to her, after what all she did to me? Why do her tears make my chest hurt? Why do I feel guilty seeing her broken? Abram thought.

"Shit! Dammit", he yelled, punching the mirror continuously.

She can move around like a slut in my absence and if I called her one, she felt hurt. What a hypocrite, he mentally growled recollecting how seductive she was looking last night and what that asshole was commenting on her, making him lose his cool.

Only he knows how he controlled himself, seeing Maira looking hot in his bed with just a quilt around. It took all his self control to mask his arousal for her while spewing the insult to her. He was not angry at her, he was angry at himself for still letting her control his emotions for her and he vented that on her.

Unknown to him, his act shattered her and her confidence.

Once his anger subsided, he was thinking of apologizing to her if his ego lets him or at least to drop her at her home as the place was little far from the city, however, when he came out,

he saw the room was empty but he noticed there was a note on the bedside drawer.

"You did the right thing by divorcing a whore", it was written with a tear stain.

He immediately rushed out of the house as he felt something was not right, something bad was going to happen.

"Fuck, Fuck", he growled seeing the corridor empty. The apartment was situated near city outskirts and there were no means of transport. She was not carrying her phone and her dress, it could make any man go wild for her.

"Fuck Maira, after all these months staying away from you, you still could make me worry for you", he said to no one while starting his car.

To add to his frustration, it started raining heavily. He was just out of the main gate when he noticed a small figure walking slowly, in the distance. He knew who it was and immediately sigh in relief.

Thank God, he whispered.

However, before he could chase Maira, a car stopped near her and the next second she was gone.

Depression

Maira was staring out of the window at the steady and dreary rain while her companion, driving the car, chose to remain silent seeing her blank expression. He knew whatever she faced affected her deeply and the dishevelled look couldn't deny his dread.

Elijah signed, looking at her defeated form and he knew even if he asked her, she would not utter a single word. That's how Maira was. Anything that bothered her, she would not immediately say it out, whether it is her anger or her pain. She always kept it to herself and once it reached her saturation point, she burst out.

You are the best thing that happened to me. The best thing about you is your soul, it's pure.

I did the right thing by divorcing a whore like you.

She laughed bitterly thinking, how Abram's view changed about her in just two years. Elijah could see, although her face was blank her eyes were full of sorrow which she had been controlling.

He was shocked when he saw her walking on a deserted lane in a messy look barefooted, holding her heels in one hand. She did not even comprehend that it was rainy. He immediately

stopped his car in front of her and when she raised her head to look at him, her lip twitched.

1

Elijah stopped the car in front of a small motel and took disorientated Maira inside, oblivious to them, a pair of black iris were following their moment.

Abram sneered, "Good job Maira, you found another man just after leaving my place, Do I even know you?".

When Abram turned his car around, that same moment Elijah stepped out, leaving Maira in the room to buy her decent clothes. He booked a room with an intent for her to change and freshen up before reaching her home. It was obvious she was not in her right state and Elijah had to help her.

When he came back with a decent dress and basic toiletries, he found Maira at the same place where he left her.

"Maira, you need to freshen up and then we will go out to eat", Elijah said, gently tugging her elbow.

She raised her head, looking at him without any emotions. He gave her a gentle smile and pulled her towards the bathroom while he waited outside the room. They stopped at a small cafe, all the while Elijah was observing Maira. Seeing her unresponsive, he had to call Sharon for help.

Sharon lived in her rented apartment alone and Elijah thought it was best to leave Maira at her place instead.

"I found her walking alone in a deserted lane, I wonder how she got over there and why she was wearing such clothes? She never wore such bold dress before", Elijah asked Sharon, who gave him a cup of tea. Meanwhile the moment Maira reached Sharon's place, she went straight to bed and sleep consumes her.

"That ass happened", Sharon said with a scowl.

"Abram? He is here?" Elijah questioned.

"I took her out yesterday to get her out of her sorrow and for once she seems to get out of it, then we happened to see that scoundrel and after that I couldn't find Maira. All I came to know was that Abram barged into the ladies' room and dragged Maira with him".

"Entire night I didn't sleep, worried where he took her plus her phone and bag was with me only". Sharon added.

Elijah frowned and said, "but she was alone when I saw her, I didn't see Abram anywhere".

"What can you expect from an ass who left his wife after tricking her in abortion", she said.

"What now?", Elijah questioned sipping his tea.

"I already asked her parents for today's stay, let her rest and then maybe she will talk, you know, unless she wants nobody can make her talk", Sharon said while looking at sleeping Maira.

"Then I will see you both at the office tomorrow, let me know if you need anything", with that Elijah left.

When Sharon went to wake Maira up, she screamed. She was lying on the floor in her own blood oozing out of her slit wrist. She immediately called Elijah and they took her to the hospital.

"Elijah, since I owe you one time, I am not reporting it to the police, you know the rules", his friend who was a doctor said.

"She is not in danger, if you want, you can meet her", he added.

What disturbed Sharon and Elijah was that Maira was never one to do such thing. Even when she was vulnerable she never back down or succumbed to worse situations. When they entered the ward, Maira was awake and was gazing at her bandaged wrist.

"Am I a bad person?", Maira said still gazing her wrist.

Both were staring at each other when Maira looked at them since they entered the ward.

"Why can't I ever get what I wanted? For once I thought to put end to my misery and see I can't even die peacefully", she said with a sad smile.

4

Sharon sat beside her on the bed, while Elijah was leaning over the wall with his arms crossed around his chest. Both didn't interrupt her and let her talk since this was the only way they can get to know what happened last night which drive her to take her own life.

"My studies, my marriage, my lifestyle, everything I did as my parents told me too, I never stepped out for a party or never even bunked any class. I never raised my voice over anyone, I listen to everybody, I respected everyone around me. Where did I go wrong? I might have done something bad for which I am paying", she said while her eyes welled up.

4

"For once, at least one time I thought I will get what I want, I thought I deserved to get what I want, Am I a bad person that God is punishing me?", with that she started sobbing hysterically.

"No baby, you are the best I ever saw, you deserve more in life", Sharon consoled her.

"No, I am a bad woman, you know what they call such woman?", Maira asked.

"Whore", Sharon gasped, seeing her friend defeated.

"Enough Maira" Elijah shouted at hearing Maira calls herself a whore.

1

He marched towards the bed and sat on the other side of the bed. He pulled Maira up from the bed and asked, "Did Abram say that to you?". He had a notion all this was related to Abram.

"Don't touch me, I am not a good woman, I sleep with men, yes, I slept with him last night. I slept with my soon to be ex-husband. That makes me a whore".

Slap.

Sharon gasped and covered her mouth, seeing Elijah slap Maira. Elijah was always a kind and sensible man and it was rare to see him lose his cool.

5

"I hope this was enough to wake you".

Maira was holding her cheek and sobbing, Elijah didn't budge.

"If you are done with your shit then probably we can talk", Elijah said without any empathy.

When Maira looked at him with tears, he said, "Just because one low life doesn't know your worth, you will believe his shit. A man who can't respect his wife doesn't qualify to judge

anyone. Stop seeing your worth from someone else's eyes. Everybody has a purpose in our life, either they are a gift or they become our lesson. The lesson that couldn't kill us makes us stronger. God is not punishing you, in fact he is giving another chance. Most of us don't even get a second chance, but you got one. Did you even think about your parents? What would have happened after you die?.

2

"I am tired, I am tired to struggle for everything to achieve in my life", Maira said, closing her eye with a sign.

"For once, live for yourself. May be you got a second chance to live your life for yourself and not for anybody else. If you don't respect yourself, how do you expect others to respect you".

An awkward silence prevailed inside the ward.

"Now, if you are done, we can go home or if you wish, you can stay here and pull another stunt", when Elijah said, Maira simply shook her head.

When Elijah went to get his car, Sharon looked at Maira and said, "You know Elijah once owned a company, when his sister was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer he left everything to take care of her. He left no stone just to make her sister live a little longer. But with his lack of involvement in business and his

sister's cancer treatment took a toll, he had sold everything and started working as a mere analyst when he could be a CEO".

This information was new for Maira and she was surprised to hear it from Sharon. *How come she knows and I don't?* She thought.

"Still, after doing everything he lost his sister. When he saw you today, it triggered him. He spent his fortune buying a second chance for his sister and he couldn't. Everybody doesn't get a second chance Maira, what happened in the past was disturbing but don't let that hamper your present or future. You are much more than what you think about yourself".

A silent tear rolled out of her eyes. In the car Maira was glancing at Elijah, who had a calm expression, and when he saw her looking at him, he gave a smile. She would have never thought such calm person holds so much pain behind.

That night Maira stayed again with Sharon because her wrist was bandaged and she felt ashamed to face her parents after pulling her stunt.

The next day Sharon and Maira went together to the office, upon reaching they notice the atmosphere in the office was chaotic. It was Elijah who informed them.

"The client visit that was suppose to happen next month is postponed".

"When?", both asked in unison.

"Today", Elijah said.

"And also the new assistant vice president will be joining them too. You guys better move your ass and clear your desk. It seems, he has OCD and doesn't like untidy workplace", with that they immediately went to their respective place.

It was almost lunch time, when they were called in for an urgent meeting.

"The new AVP has already arrived and would like to meet you all", Shantanu said.

"I want a new haircut", Maira whispered to Sharon while they were waiting for their new boss.

"Let's go after.....", Sharon stopped abruptly looking behind Maira.

While Maira heard Shantanu, "Let's welcome our new boss", she followed Sharon's gazes and saw him.

"Abram", his name escape from her mouth involuntarily as a whisper.

New Boss

'Shock' was evident on Maira's pale face.

How can it be possible? She thought while looking at Abram, who didn't notice her till now.

He was wearing a crisp white shirt along with gray pants and a blue tie. He ditched his blazer coat, indicating he was mid of something and had joined the meet in haste. Being 5.11 tall, lean built with toned forearms, he was visible to people even at the farthest corner of the room.

3

He still didn't lose his charm, she thought.

There was a round of applause resonating inside the conference room, and the moment Abram was turning around in their direction, Maira immediately hid behind Elijah. Since the room was filled with more than 100 employees, Abram failed to notice 3 pairs of eyes with shock marked all over them.

"Good Afternoon Team, it's good to see you all. You can call me Abram. I don't believe in formalities. I am a man of few words, so I would directly come to the point. I believe in hard work and sincerity. I expect nothing but your 100%, and with the new client acquisition in the transit, I want no excuses or failure."

There were a few "yes" here and there while some nodded their head in agreement with their new boss.

"Now...," Abram paused when his gaze fell on a couple sitting at the back of the room looking towards Maira's direction, and he felt he saw them somewhere. Nevertheless, he continued, "Now, once the client visit is completed, I would be reviewing each one of your performance for the last 6 months, and believe me when I say this, each one of you will be reassigned with work you deserved. Greater the performance, higher the opportunity, and weaker the performance, then...," he trailed off intentionally.

He once again looks around the gloomy faces while lingering for a few seconds over the couple at the back of the room and then said, "Well, good luck and good day to you all" with that, he left the room.

I have seen that woman before somewhere, and why that guy looks familiar too, Abram thought while exiting the room.

"Didn't you say that he was jobless and was struggling with his poor restaurant business?" Sharon asked Maira.

Sharon, Maira, and Elijah were sitting in the cafeteria.

"Yes, he had this restaurant along with his best friend, it was running in loss, and many times I helped him financially," Maira said, grabbing her hair.

"How the hell does he barge into a management job in just two years?" Sharon scoffed.

Elijah was quiet and was in deep thoughts, while Maira was hell confused, thinking how Abram climbed the ladder in his career.

"It's just not making sense to me. Why does it happen to me? My job is my heaven, where I felt alive, and now I have to face the person who I wished not to see anymore." Maira said.

"When was the last time you talked to him," Elijah asked all of a sudden.

"The day when he slapped me with a divorce paper, I never saw him or talked to him," Maira said in a low voice.

"I think the reason you couldn't get in touch with him was that he was never in the city. Didn't you hear the new AVP moved from the US branch? He definitely was not in the country, and all the time, you were desperately looking for a chance to talk to him," Elijah finally told what he was contemplating.

"Maira, I might not know the pain you went through, and it's your life to dictate, but don't you think it's time for you to move past those painful times and start anew?" Elijah leaned towards her and grabbed Maira's palm in his.

"Till when are you going to let him affect you like this?"

"I love him, Elijah. I just can't stop loving him; I wish I could. I wish there was a button which I could press and remove him from my heart," Maira cried.

1

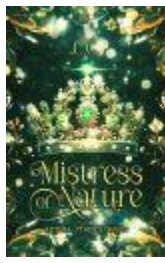
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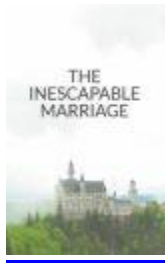
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BEEP... BEEP.. The alarm clock struck at 5:00 AM . She rose hurriedly and started with her daily chores with perfection But something was strange in her . was she a pe...



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"You don't have to stop loving him, but love yourself more than you love him," Elijah patted her palm.

"When Allen cheated on me, do you remember what you told me?" Sharon asked, hearing which Elijah stiffened.

"You told me he didn't deserve me, and that's why God removed him from my life. You said I deserve the best, and I don't need someone else approval for that. Where is that Maira now? Where is that confident girl now? You changed after you got married; Abram changed you. You promised you will live for yourself now, right?" when Sharon said, Maira only nodded her head.

"Good, now it's time for that badass bitch to come out of her cocoon and let that asshole burn in hell," Sharon said with a glint of excitement.

Elijah signed and said, "What will I do with your language Sharon, I don't want our children to inherit your trait."

1

Sharon rolled her eyes but couldn't stop saying, "Children, my ass, for that first you need to do the hanky panky with me, and second, you need to marry me. God, I am stuck with two oldies."

"You..", "Sorry I give up," Elijah said while raising his hand in surrender. Seeing her best friend's confrontation, Maira laughed.

I lived for others for all this time and did what they want; now I deserve to live for myself once. When I can do so much for others, why can't I do the same for myself? Maira was lost in her thoughts.

"Now, I made a plan for tonight, after office, we are going to a salon and then shopping; how does it sound?" Sharon said, squealing with excitement.

"And I am driving you guys," Elijah said more like a command than as a request. He knew his girlfriend's temperaments and how she gets carried away sometimes.

By the end of the day, all three of them exited the elevator with Sharon and Maira ahead of Elijah. At that exact moment, Abram happened to see the side view of Elijah from his car. It occurred to him that he was the same man he saw yesterday with Maira. He overlooked Maira, who was walking ahead of him.

His knuckles turned white while holding the steering wheel. He had an urge to walk and smash his face.

"Yes"

"No"

"Yes, Maira"

"No, Sharon, I am not cutting my long hair short."

"Ah, yes you are; I mean, look at you; you got lovely brown and long wavy hair but is it of any use since you always wear a low ponytail. Let them set your hair a little above your waist. Come on, it will look great," Sharon argued, and eventually, Maira obliges to her threats.

"Yes"

"No"

"Oh God, Maira, we are not doing this again. When I say try the Goddamn dresses, just try them."

"Are you crazy? I am not wearing those pencil skirts for the office. What will I tell Dadda? You know how conservative he could be when it comes to clothing," Maira replied.

"Fine, at least try those shirts and formal pants; it is neither revealing nor hideous like your old rags," Sharon was out of patience and made a mental note not to go out for Maira's shopping.

Elijah was enjoying the situation, but he dare not offend his girlfriend.

While Maira was trying the clothes, Sharon turned to Elijah and said, "when I asked her to get that badass bitch out of her cocoon, I think she took it way too seriously. I never knew she could be so stubborn at times." Elijah chuckled, but the next second he stopped when Sharon glared at him.

"Maira, for god sake, please don't make me beg you. Just buy those bloody shoes I choose," Sharon begged her friend.

1

A 6-inch black stiletto, 4-inch beige-colored pumps, and 5-inch white sandal were what Sharon chose. Maira wanted something with fewer inches, but after one pleading look from Elijah and Sharon's exhausted face, she said, "Fine, But I am not buying that red lipstick."

"Such an ass," Sharon muttered.

The next day, Maira stepped into the office, and her colleague gasped, looking at her. When Sharon met, her expression changed from astonishment to smirk. Maira was dressed in formal black pants and a pastel green short-sleeve shirt which she teamed up with black stilettos and nude makeup, flaunting her new hairstyle.

"Oh my God, that's my badass bitch," Sharon squealed.

Meanwhile, Abram was staring at the ceiling in deep thoughts when there was a knock on the door. "Come in."

Elijah came inside and stood near the desk.

Abram was looking at him, 5.11 tall, muscular built, thanks to the number of hours spent in the gym, deep green eyes, sharp jawline, looks like he came from a wealthy family with his aura and spectacular dress sense. No wonder Maira is with him.

Abram thought.

"Mr. Johnson, please take a seat."

Elijah knew about Abram, but he never met or spoke to him before. He only saw him in a picture that Maira used to carry.

"Since when are you working with the company?"

"More than a year, Mr. Ali," Elijah replied coldly. When Shantanu told Abram was looking for him, he knew something was amiss.

"Don't be so formal; call me Abram."

"Sure, is there something you wish to talk to me about?" Elijah asked.

"Not really! heard a lot about you from Shantanu; I wanted to meet you personally."

1

"I hope I didn't disappoint you, Abram," Elijah said while stressing his name.

"Not for a bit, I won't keep you holding; you can carry on," Abram said while leaning forward and typing on his laptop.

Elijah stood up and was at the threshold when he heard Abram say, "Do you know anyone named Maira?"

Shit, why did I ask him? Abram cursed.

Elijah smiled coldly and replied, "I am sure who I am acquainted with is not the company's concern" with that, he left.

He seems to know something, Abram contemplated.

Maira felt like someone was watching her, and when she raised her head, she noticed most of her colleagues were peeking at her. They were curious about the change in Maira. The Maira that joined 1 year before was a woman who used to wear clothes one size bigger than her, always wearing a ponytail with

no makeup or accessories. All they know that Sharon referred her for the job.

Although Maira was excellent at her work, they never heard her talk much except for work. But today's Maira was different; she looks fabulous with nude makeup and high heels, a silver chain that complimented her fair skin, and a branded watch. However, the most surprising part was that she laughed heartily when she was talking.

When Maira turned to look at Sharon for answers, she simply winked at her. Maira rolled her eyes and could hear Sharon's unspoken words, "you are looking bomb."

"Let's go for a coffee?" Maira asked Sharon. She was getting uncomfortable having to be stared at the entire day.

Meanwhile, Abram was pacing in his cabin with no focus on his work and decided to take a break. This was his first day at the office, and because of Maira, he was unable to focus.

"Why do they have to stare at me like they never met before," Maira complained while collecting her coffee.

"Because frankly, my dear, they never saw you looking hot like this before," Sharon smirked, and a second later, she hit Maira on her butt.

Maira gasped at her friend's bold move in public and got infuriated, "You....wait," she ran behind Sharon. In a hurry to

catch Sharon, she took a turn, and with her high heels, she lost balance and was about to touch the ground. She waited for the impact to feel hot coffee burn her skin but nothing. All she felt a strong arm holding, and the next moment she heard her name, "Maira."

When she opened her eyes, she met someone's gaze; she was not ready to meet at that moment.

Who is She?

Mrs. Abram Ali, get your ass back on the bed right now.

No.

Are you disobeying me?

Maybe.

Oh, I will give you two options, move your ass or...

Or?

Or just pray that when I catch you, I go easy on you.

We shall see.

Oh, you have no idea how much you are turning me on, my catty.

Let go of me, Mr. Ali.

Oh my Persian pussy, never I would let you go.

You are so cheap.

What? I was calling you a cat.

"Mr. Ali, can you let me go?" Maira said with no emotions, although her stomach fluttered with the familiar warmth and hold.

Been caught staring at Maira, embarrassed, he let go of Maira but the next second he asked, "What are you doing here?"

She wanted to ask him the same question, how the hell he changed in just 2 years.

Why is she looking different? Abram thought while openly gazing at her from head to toe.

Maira didn't reply, however, she turned to Sharon who was stunned at the moment, and said, "Let's go."

By the time Abram could register what just happened a few moments ago, Maira was out of his view. His confusion turned into a fury and when he looked around, he noticed many of the employees had seen their encounter. He lost his need for coffee and stride back to his cabin.

"What the fuck is she doing here? How dare she just walk past me," he whispers yelled.

1

Maira was crying hysterically in one of the washroom cubicles when she heard a knock.

"I know you are inside Maira and I also know you are crying, come out babe," Sharon said.

Immediately Maira rose and opened the cubicle door. She jumped into Sharon's arm and let her emotions out.

"Hey, you did great there. He deserved to be treated like this long back, but better late than never," Sharon was comforting her.

"Why do I love him so much? No matter how cold I could pretend, deep down I know how much I crave for that touch."

"I know I should be strong, but I am a human, not a robot. Out of the blue, I can't just stop letting him affect me. With time it would go I know but till then it is difficult for me. I feel suffocated, I feel so many emotions at the same time."

2

"I can't breathe Sharon."

"Listen to me Maira, on my count take a deep breath, 1, 2,3 breathe in," Sharon said while still holding Maira in her arms who was taking a sharp breath in.

"Good, 1, 2, 3, now breathe out, do this with me,"

After a few rounds of breath in and breath out, Maira calmed down and pulled out of the embrace.

"It's never easy, but where's the fun when it gets easy," Sharon nudges Maira looking at her reflection in the bathroom's mirror.

Washing her face and applying her mascara, Maira stepped out of the bathroom, however, when she reached her desk, she was informed to meet the new boss.

"That didn't take long," Sharon snorted.

Abram was going through her file which says, she joined more than a year ago and her teammate includes Sharon, her best friend, and none other than Elijah. He sneered at his name.

That's why they looked so familiar yesterday, may she was also there with them. Abram thought.

Outside the cabin, Maira was still fidgeting with the thought of whether to knock or not. As if on cue Abram walked up to the door and witnessed Maira about to knock on the door. Maira was hesitant when Abram stepped aside for her to enter.

Keep it cool Maira, just be professional, he is only your boss now, she encouraged herself.

While Maira walked past him towards the desk, Abram's gaze roamed all over her body. The fitted pants and shirt were complimenting her petite curves, while her waist-length waves were alluring enough. He never knew she could have a great dress sense.

Who is this Maira? Abram thought. His thoughts were interrupted when Maira spoke.

"I heard you were looking for me, Mr. Ali?"

Abram raised an eyebrow at hearing her addressing him as Mr. Ali than Abram.

Oh really Kitten, acting all professional, he mocked.

"Yes Maira, have a seat," he said while taking his seat, but halted when Maira said, "Ms. Noor, Please."

"If you insist," he maintained his aura of superiority.

"I would be lying if I say I was not surprised to see you here, in fact, I asked you the same but you neglected to answer. Now, as your boss's boss, aren't you obliged to answer when your senior questions you?" he said authoritatively.

Maira took a sharp breath and replied, "Yes, I am obliged to answer my seniors, but I was not sure how to answer an illogical question. Wearing a company tag, what would I be doing in the company's cafeteria, Mr. Ali? Isn't it obvious?"

Abram was taken aback by her fiery reply laced with sarcasm challenging his common sense.

"Ms. Noor I am sure you are not that dumb not to understand my question," he replied calmly but he was losing his temper with her reply.

Maira took a glance at her file on his desk and snorted, "I am sure you have retrieved information about me from HR, now do I still have to answer your question, Mr. Ali?"

"Cut the crap Maira, don't challenge my patience," Abram banged on the desk making Maira flinch.

"I will make it clear for you, I work here and the only connection we have is of boss and subordinate. You have the right to question when it comes to my work and anything apart from that is not your concern. Now, if you have something to ask about my work I would be happy to answer, Mr. Ali."

Abram fist his palm, he wanted to say something, but his gaze fell on her bandaged wrist. Before he could stop, the words left his mouth, "What happened to your wrist?"

"Nothing that should interest you," was all she replied.

Abram felt the Maira sitting in front of him was not his wife. His wife was soft-spoken and was easy to read. Her face showed all her emotions. Even till the day before yesterday he read hurt and pain all over her face when he called her a whore, but this new Maira was making it difficult to maintain his composure.

"You may leave for now." Maira felt there was a hidden meaning when he said 'for now'.

What worse could he do now? Divorce me? That's all he can do now, I won't let him hurt me again, Maira thought while leaving the cabin.

"Dammit," he snapped once Maira left his cabin.

"Burn in hell for all I care, I won't, I can't let her affect me again. All this month's separation and I act like a love lost puppy around her. I hate her and I should hate her,"

When Maira told all the days happening to Elijah, he was lost in deep thoughts, *from a restaurant owner to a management executive, how did he cover that journey in only two years,* Elijah thought.

He was once a CEO of his own family business and knew inside of how people climb the ladder in their career, but it will at least take them 5 years of constant struggle.

Sharon's Date Night

Every day Sharon used to drop Maira at her home since it was on her way, however, as Elijah planned for a date, Maira was looking for a cab.

"Maira, how are you going home?" Sharon asked.

"I'll book a cab, you guys should get going now," Maira replied while checking for a cab in an app.

"We can drop you, it won't be a problem for us," Elijah joined them.

"It's ok, this is not the first time I am traveling alone."

Meanwhile, Sharon and Elijah bid her goodbye, Maira was notified that Abram asked her to meet him.

"Now, what does he want," she huffed.

"Ms. Noor, I am sorry to bother you, but I need some data urgently," Abram said without glancing at her and working on his laptop.

"I need the customer satisfaction report for the last quarter, I hate to say this, but you have only 30 minutes to pull the data."

"30 minutes are too little of time, I need to run a program to retrieve millions of customer feedback for the last 3 months," Maira said in exasperation.

Abram stopped typing and raked his hair in annoyance. He rubbed his forehead contemplating, suddenly he asked Maira, "when two can pull the data and create a report, what's the minimum time it will take?"

"Maybe less than 2 hours," Maira replied in her professional tone.

"Is there anyone else from your team available right now?"

"No, they all left for the day," Maira replied.

"Ok, you go back and start pulling the data," Abram said while continuing with his work.

Maira wanted to retort, but before that Abram added, "if it was not urgent I wouldn't have asked you, anyway I will also work along with you."

What does he know about creating reports? He was a restaurant owner, Maira thought.

Maira was lost in her thought when Abram asked her again, "Is there a problem?" She abruptly blurts out, "Do you even know how to pull data and create a report?" the next second she froze and mentally slapped herself.

What the hell, how does it matter to me?

Abram stopped typing and looked at flushed Maira. "On a second thought, get your laptop over here," he said, before

adding, "on your way, ask housekeeping to get me a coffee, I hope you remember how I want it, black coffee, no milk, no sugar."

Asshole, she cursed him inwardly.

"What was that? By any chance are you cursing me Ms. Noor?" he smirked while saying.

Asshole, she again cursed.

"No, Mr. Ali, how could I," she said, giving a plastered smile.

"So get going then, unless you want to spend the night in the office," with that, he waved angrily at Maira off.

Reluctant Maira had to sit with him in his cabin, however, she was surprised to see his professional side, although he was an asshole, he was very dedicated towards his work.

"Are you done checking me out?" Abram said all of a sudden without looking at Maira.

You wish, Maira mentally rolled her eyes.

Maira chooses not to answer him and continues with her work. Only she knows how petrified she was from inside to be with him and the memories of their passionate night flashing before her. On the other hand, Abram could feel his bulge throbbing between his thighs whenever Maira was tossing her falling hair.

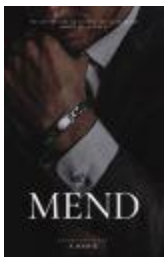
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["The Caregiver and the Mob Boss \(pt.2\)"](#)  [Avelina](#)
[has always cared for those who can't care for themselves. With](#)
[a baby on the way, and a man who can't stand h...](#)



[Lady Laila](#)

[1.6M85K](#)

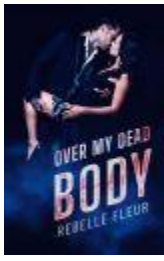
[WARNING, MATURE AND SEXUAL CONTENT! She was not born](#)
[a lady, she was made one. She was not born into wealth, she](#)
[was given it. Laila is a woman of the king, and she fell...](#)



[My Billionaire Prince \[#Completed\]](#)

3M115K

Ana slowly moved her eyes down to check what she was wearing. At first she couldn't recognize the furry dress covering her chest, but was amazed how comfortable it felt...



Over My Dead Body

37.2M1.1M

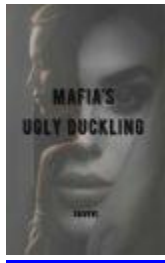
Deadly assassins Allegra and Ace have been trying in vain to kill each other for years. With a mutual enemy threatening their mafias, they find themselves in an unexpect...



[From Betrayal To Bliss](#)

[198K2.7K](#)

[I won't be giving description. Come and read it. The idea belongs to the original author of Trial marriage: Husband need to work hard.](#)



[Mafia's ugly duckling](#)

[252K8.5K](#)

[Have you ever regret helping someone in need of.... Well i do..... ONE NIGHT, ONE HELP it all took to change my life upside down and most importantly I regret it even i...](#)

For an hour they worked in silence, only the clicking of keyboard buttons was audible. All Maira wanted to do was to finish the work as soon as possible and leave, however, she was facing a problem with coding the file. Seeing her annoyed,

Abram walked over to her and looked at her laptop. Abram leaned over her and said, "line 35 of the program, change the syntax, and hit enter."

When Maira did, the program gave the required result and created the report for her.

She exclaimed in joy, "How did you know that?" and turned towards Abram only to notice his face was just an inch away from her and he was staring at her.

"Just so you know running a restaurant was my passion but before that, I worked as an analyst too, 18 months of our marriage and you don't even know your husband," it was more disappointing than sarcasm.

Maira was speechless, but their moment was interrupted by Elijah's call.

She blessed him for calling at the right time while Abram felt the opposite, he cursed him for spoiling their moment. He wanted to say something more to her, but making an excuse for a call she quickly moved away from him.

Elijah called to check whether she reached home or not. This gesture made a stir in Abram's heart. However, what irked him the most was the smile she had while talking to Elijah, Abram was unaware that Sharon was on the other side of the call and

was chattering about the unknown romantic side of Elijah however, soon her joy turned into scorn.

"What do you mean you are alone with him?" Sharon yelled, making Maira pull away from her phone from her ear, while Elijah was cooling her down. When Maira felt a gaze on her back, she excused herself from the cabin and went out to speak in private.

"Sharon, calm the hell down now," Maira snapped at her enraged friend.

"Fine," though Sharon was taken aback by her, she chose to act snobbish.

"I can handle this, sooner or later I have to. Are we good?" hearing her confidence, Sharon didn't retort, however, after Maira ended the call she turned to Elijah and said, "Remember I told you about being a badass bitch, she took it seriously, she snapped at me, can you believe that?"

"Yes, I can, let her fight this on her own. We will always be there for her."

When Maira returned to the cabin, she was smiling thinking about Sharon's reaction, however, for Abram it looked like Elijah made her smile.

Is he the reason that she changed all of a sudden? Abram thought while looking at Maira.

"Who is he?" he blurts out.

Maira's smile faded hearing Abram and she frowned, "Excuse me?"

"Excused, Who was on the call?" Abram said.

She rolled her eyes and continued to work. She chose not to answer. Maira was a girl who believed silence is better than unnecessary drama in life. Even during their marriage whenever there was an argument she would remain silent. Firstly, it would avoid unnecessary complications and secondly, it would spare her the guilt of hurting others with her words. But this trait of hers was something Abram never liked, for him, it looked like her arrogance.

Taking her silence as her arrogance, Abram marched towards her, turned her chair towards himself, and leaned, "Who was on that call Maira?"

Her heart beats rapidly with his sudden action and his breath fanning her face. She shivered when she saw a rage in his eyes.

"That Mr. Ali is none of your concern," she replied with a rasping breath.

"Answer me, dammit or you will not like what I will do next," Abram said loudly with a short breath in between the words.

Maira was frightened and to make matters worse, she was alone with him. *This was it*, she thought.

1

"So be it then, he was one of my clients," Maira replied. She was scared of him at that time, but she was more hurt by his behavior.

He grabbed her neck on hearing her reply, but the next second loosen it when she said, "Isn't that what a whore should do, Mr. Ali?"

5

He lowered his head and moved away from her. He was still angry at her for talking to Elijah, but when she repeated his words, he felt remorse. That day he never meant to call her a whore but it was his possessive beast who got enraged with jealousy when he saw other men in the club drooling over her.

He rubbed his temple while Maira coughed, taking a deep breath. Before she could balance her breathing, he said, "Get out, right now."

She felt humiliated, first it was he who called her for the reports and no reason yelled at her for talking to her friend and when she repeated his words, he shoved her out.

She didn't wait for a second, grabbed her laptop, and left. *Who does he think he is? I am not his toy that he could play with any time he wants to*, she was fuming.

In her fury, she lost the track of time and distance she traveled. When she came to her senses, she noticed she was already on the main road, away from her office and the place looked almost deserted. To her luck, she got a cab and boarded it. Oblivious to Maira, Abram was quietly following her and hailed a taxi for her. Call it his possessiveness or gentleness, he interrogated the cab driver before sending it to Maira. He followed her and once she reached her home, he turned his car.

Home alone

I told you she is not what she portrays to be.

Stop it.

Denying the truth will not help you anyway, Abram.

I love her.

Does she?

1

I want her to be happy, even if it means I have to stay away from her.

Abram drove his car back to his apartment, "Why do you have to come back to my life, Maira?"

1

"Wasn't it enough that I let you go once, why are you making it difficult for me?" his trail of thoughts was interrupted by a song playing on the radio. It was the song which he sang and dedicated to Maira when he proposed to her before their wedding.

2

When Maira stepped into her house, she saw her father waiting for her.

"Dadda, why aren't you asleep?"

"Ah, nothing, I thought of having a warm tea with my daughter, it's been a long time that I could spend time with her," Rayan said.

"You made tea for me? Why did you? I would have made for you," Maira smiled and said.

It was one of the things her dad used to do for her and she missed them. With her divorce proceedings, there was a lot that was missing from their life. Although Maira had 4 more siblings, her parents chose to stay with her during her difficult times.

"Now, now can't I make tea for my favorite daughter?" He said.

"Don't say that in front of Rhea, she will explode," Maira said.

Meanwhile, Rayan noticed the change in Maira's clothing and he raised an eyebrow making her nervous. Maira was raised by a liberal father, however, when it comes to modesty, it was an utmost priority for him.

"Dadda, I will go and change first," she made an excuse but was stopped by Rayan.

"Maira, is there anything you want to say to your dadda?"

Rayan had to stop her from running away when he saw her bandaged wrist.

"No, nothing Dadda, why do you feel like that?" she stammered.

"Look at me Maira and then say the same thing you said before."

Rayan knew when his daughter was lying and he became anxious to see her wrist. It was covered in a gauze which was unusual.

Having faced Abram sometime ago, Maira was already in emotional turmoil and now her father. In the morning she left early to avoid her parent's gaze but now she was in front of her father's scrutinizing eyes.

"Dadda, it's just a small scratch, nothing serious."

"Okay, go, and change. I will warm the tea."

Just like her mother, doesn't want to share her pain, Rayan thought.

Maira made sure to wear a full sleeve loose t-shirt and her pajamas. While they were sipping tea Maira kept glancing at her father who was lost in his thoughts.

"Dadda, you ok? You look lost," Maira breaks the silence.

"Maira, you know that you are our favorite child, never said no to us, even when we arranged a marriage for you, unlike your siblings who had a love marriage."

"Yes, I know, you always love me more."

"Rhea is expecting," Rayyan said.

Rhea was Maira's younger sister who got married last year and stays in a different city, unlike her other sisters. Being rebellious of all, she never takes no for an answer.

YOU'LL ALSO LIKE



MISTRESS OF NATURE

4.3M345K

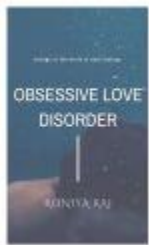
Betrayed by the people she once loved, cared for, and protected, Queen Gatria is determined to make everyone suffer and feel her wrath. With the intent of saving her sis...



HIRAETH

901K20.8K

Hiraeth: a homesickness for a home you can't return to, or that never was. *Two broken souls, a d...*



Obsessive Love Disorder

432K19.3K

what the hell ?? where am I?? I couldn't see straight with all my dizziness ...My legs refusing to move,trembling with no energy left in my body... All I could remember...



Ex Girlfriend

2.2M59.8K

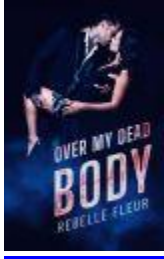
Breaking up and leaving me without an acceptable reason is very irresponsible and heartless of you. All I did is love you, give everything you wish, and I gave all myself...



Eternally

944K21.1K

Oriya Deronte, the American Mafia's future Donna. She was destined to be the queen. Skills in assassination and seduction have been mastered. At the age of 14, she was g...



Over My Dead Body

37.2M1.1M

Deadly assassins Allegra and Ace have been trying in vain to kill each other for years. With a mutual enemy threatening their mafias, they find themselves in an unexpect...



Pessimist

4.1M94.7K

[01/07/2021] - [13/04/2023] "You can't keep going around like a fucking maniac and treating me like shit. That isn't how relationships work," Sophia's voice wa...

"Oh my God, that's so great. I am so happy," Maira squealed with excitement.

"You won't be too happy when you hear the other part of the conversation," Rayan said. "Which is?"

"She wants us to stay with her since it's her first delivery," Rayan revealed. "Oh!," was all Maira said.

Rayan was looking at his daughter's face for her reply. Since both of his daughters were going through a hard time, it was difficult for him to choose between them. Observing her father's uneasiness over her silence, she said, "It's ok dad, you stayed with me for 2 years, you even missed out preparing for Rhea's wedding for me. I can't make you stay with me knowing well that she is pregnant. You should go to her and also it's just for a few months' '.

When Rayan noticed a genuine smile on his daughter's face, he realized she was confident to stay alone. He was surprised to see her confidence, but his smile vanished when his gaze fell on her wrist. Maira followed his gaze and understood what her father would be thinking.

"Dad, you always tell me, we fall so that we can rise again, I'd my share of fall, now it's time for me to rise. I won't disappoint you."

"That's my baby girl, we're always there for you."

"I know," with that, she hugged her father for long knowing well that it will be long when she can hug him again.

Maira had to take 1 week of leaves to help her parents with packing and also dropping them at her sister's place since Rhea demanded her to come along with her parents and stay with her in her happy times.

"You seem to change," Rhea said while walking towards Maira, who was busy in the kitchen. "What? Am I looking fat?" Maira jokes.

"You wish, even if you eat a complete turkey you would not gain even an ounce of weight," Rhea mocked her sister.

5

"You sure to stay alone since being the most obedient child, you never stay away from Mum and Dadda except for your...", Rhea stopped and mentally slapped herself for reminding Maira of her marriage.

"You know Rhea, dadda loves me more than you," Maira said while diverting the topic.

"What!," she roared. "Did Dadda tell you that himself?"

"Why don't you ask Dadda," Maira grinned, looking at her sister's flushed face. With that Rhea started throwing her

tantrums while Maira was enjoying her father's pitiful appearance.

"My, my look who's back," Sharon smirked when Maira came back to the office.

"Well, someone was restless in your absence," Sharon added while filing her nails. "Who?" Maira asked.

Before Sharon could reply, Maira was notified to meet Abram. "Think of the devil," Sharon snorted.

"What does he want with me in the early hours?" Maira was already annoyed with the travel.

"Mr. Ali, you were looking for me," Maira said when she entered the cabin.

Today she was wearing a maroon top with black pants, her hair loosely pinned mid of her head. Her diamond studs sparkling and branded watch. Everything about her was beautiful.

Abram was mesmerized by her, but masked his emotions and said, "Ms. Noor, good morning to you too."

Asshole, she cursed.

"Thank you," Abram said again. Maira was confused about whether he said thank you as a continuation to his speech or he heard her calling him an asshole.

"Good morning, Mr. Ali, now, do you have something for me, or I can leave?" Maira said with no emotions.

"You seem to be in a hurry, did I disturb your meeting with someone special?" Abram smirked at her uneasiness.

Maira was fuming, having to meet him when all she was trying to do was to be invisible to him. While Abram thought she was eager to meet Elijah.

"No Sir, unless you want to chit chat with me, I can stay here for all-day," she replied with a mock smile.

"Even if I had to I won't waste my time chit-chatting with you, now get your laptop and finish your work."

"Excuse me? Which work?" Maira said with a frown.

"Before you took your unplanned leave, you were supposed to create a report for me. I must say I am disappointed with your commitments," Abram said while stressing on commitment.

"Mr. Ali, as far as I remembered, you asked me to get out of your cabin, how does that make me guilty of unfinished work?" Maira retorted.

Her heart skips a beat when she sees Abram smiling, deepening his dimples. *Focus Maira, Focus*

"Well, you were supposed to inform us that you won't be coming for a week, Is that my problem?" Abram replied with a smirk. *Asshole*. Maira was glaring at him.

"You should learn new words, don't you get bored of using the same word?"

Maira chose to ignore him and said, "I was on a leave, not the entire team, you could have asked someone else to create the report, and as far as I remembered you said it was urgent."

"Looks like Ms. Noor is the boss and not the other way round," Abram was losing his composure on her retaliation.

She never used to argue before, he thought.

"I'll get going then and email you the report before lunch," Maira felt the conversation was going nowhere and it's just a report, she'll get it done and probably he'll stop pestering her.

"Ms. Noor this will be my first and last time informing you, just follow the damn orders. You will be working with me in the cabin" with that, he waves her off.

1

She is getting on my nerves, what's the big deal to just sit with me and finish a damn report, Abram was fuming.

Coffee

The cabin looked more like a war zone with both Abram and Maira glaring at each other from time to time.

"Add new criteria to the report, apart from customer satisfaction, I also need the data for their dissatisfaction. The client wants to see the percentage first and then proceed with the transit," Abram said in his monotone.

All the while, he was busy with conference calls and was rigorously typing over his laptop. However, one call caught Maira's attention when he answered with a big smile, "Ma, how are you?"

Maira never had any issue with her mother in law Ruby, but she never stopped her son from divorcing her either. On the initial day of her divorce, Maira was plagued with lots of questions, why does it happen, there were no red flags or issues in their relationship, everybody was happy then why all of sudden they left her without giving a reason.

Flashes of the past made her uneasy and she made an excuse to leave the cabin, which didn't get unnoticed by Abram, nevertheless, he continued his talk with his mother.

"You came back early from the US and are not even staying with us. What happened to you?" Ruby whined.

"Ma, I got accommodation from my company plus it is convenient for me to stay there," Abram lied. He didn't want to stay at the same place where he shared numerous memories with his wife.

"Did you meet her?" Ruby asked out of the blue.

"I don't want to talk about her, Ma."

"Your lawyer has taken permission for 2 months, make sure you attend the next hearing and get over with the divorce, it's already been 2 years, I can't wait to find you a new bride," Ruby said.

2

"I gotta go Ma, I have a meeting."

"Sure, but don't forget to come over for dinner this weekend, we'll be waiting, oh, I forgot, Zara, will be coming," with that, the call ended.

Maira collected her coffee to stall her time to go back to the cabin. It took every bit of her to sit in the same cabin with him while fully aware of him gazing at her from time to time. She wanted to talk to him about their relationship, about what went wrong, about her abortion, about why he didn't attend any of the court hearings, about how he ended up being her boss but that one word he said, stopped her from approaching him; whore.

1

Get over it Maira, if it was meant to happen, it would have happened. It's your time to rise and not fall again.

When she entered the cabin, she found it to be empty. *Let's get done with the work before he comes and spoils my entire day*, she encourages herself and starts working.

She leaned forward over her laptop with coffee in her right hand and scrolling through her screen with her left. At one point, she placed her coffee on the desk to type something and when she moved her hand to hold the coffee again she found only air. The next second she saw Abram gulping down her coffee before saying, "Next time get one for me."

"There won't be a next time, Mr. Ali, I am done with the report. Have a look before I leave," she said gritting her teeth.

Bastard, she cursed him.

"You can do better with the cursing," Abram said while leaning over her shoulder to look at her screen.

2

"The reports look good, you may leave."

"If you can move away from the chair, I can get up," Maira said, noticing that he was leaning over her shoulder with one hand

on the desk and the other on the chair. Unless he moves, she can only get up from the chair by rubbing her body against his.

"I don't see I am blocking your way by any means," Abram said while inching closer to her.

Already frustrated with him drinking her coffee, she stamped her heels over his foot making him wince in pain. He immediately moved away from her while holding his foot.

"Oops, sorry I didn't see your foot there," she grabbed her laptop and rushed out of the cabin.

"No, you didn't."

"Yes, I did."

When Maira told about her little stunt to Sharon and Elijah they both burst out laughing. Their laugh attracted a lot of employees, including Abram, who was glaring at the trio.

You are going to pay for your little stunt, catty.

After Maira stamped Abram's foot, he never pestered her or asked her for any work. During one of their weekly team meetings, Shantanu was giving them the details of the client visit and how it will soon be over with results in their favor. The next pointer was to choose a team member who will be putting up a presentation of how their team works and the last year's business performance.

"Why don't you all nominate someone from your team, instead of me choosing?" Shantanu suggested.

It was Elijah who first told, "Maira is the best analyst among us, why don't we let her do the presentation."

Some agreed, some scowled thinking she was new compared to them, while some listened to Elijah and gave a thought.

Eventually, with mutual consent, Maira was nominated to give a presentation in front of the client, Management executives, and her team.

"I don't know, I am not sure," Maira was still contemplating, nevertheless she agreed with Sharon's insistence.

"Maira, congratulations. It's a big opportunity for you," Shantanu said.

"Well, you have 2 weeks to prepare it and for that, you have to sit with Abram for two weeks," he added, shocking Maira.

Coffee Room

"Why do I have to sit with Mr. Ali?" she couldn't stop but ask.

"Well, because it's a big opportunity and he wants to mentor you, not you, but whoever was selected, which is you," Shantanu said as a matter of fact.

"I don't want to then," Maira blurts out.

"She will, she is just nervous, please give her some time," Elijah said before dragging Maira.

1

"What are you doing?" Elijah said.

"I am not going to work with him Elijah, it's too much for me."

"Listen, babe, it's a big opportunity, if you pull this presentation, your promotion is confirmed. Don't lose this because of him. You already lost so much for him."

1

"But..," before Maira could retort Sharon interrupted her, "Elijah is right, don't let that dickhead screw your opportunity."

"Sharon, language Please," Elijah sighed.

The next morning, as instructed by Shantanu, Maira went up to Abram's cabin.

He was wearing a light blue shirt with black pants with a black stripe tie. The fitting perfectly accentuated his lean, muscular built. To top it off, his cologne was all that could drive any woman mad for him. As usual, he was looking charismatic.

"Yes?" Abram asked indifferently.

"Shantanu, said I have to work with you till the presentation," Maira said with a frown.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Abram said without raising his head.

Fuck you, the moment Maira cursed him inwardly he gave a warning glare.

"Good morning, Mr. Ali," she sneered.

"Could be better, next time say it as you mean it," Abram said while continuing his work.

Maira awkwardly stood there, not knowing what and when she should work on.

It's just for two weeks, you can do it, she encouraged herself.

"Get me a coffee."

"Excuse me?" Maira had to ask

"Get me a coffee that you had on that day," Abram said.

"I am not your maid."

"It's ok if you don't want to go alone, we can go together if that's what you want," Abram said while shrugging.

Maira stormed out of his cabin and directly went to Sharon.

"I am not giving the presentation."

"What? Why?" Sharon screamed.

When Maira told about her encounter, Sharon said, "Don't you get it, he is doing it deliberately. He wants you to quit by yourself. It's just a matter of two weeks. You can handle him. It's not the time to give up."

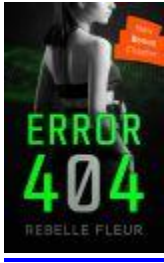
Reluctantly Maira went to his cabin along with his coffee. To add fuel to the fire, he said, "I am disappointed with your efficiency."

The entire day passed with Abram trying to provoke her while she chooses to remain calm and not let him affect her, but soon that resolution of hers was shattered when he said, "by the way, nice pants, fits you perfectly."

"Mr. Ali, let me remind you again, I am your subordinate, so be within your limits or I will complain about harassment from you"

"It's just a compliment, sorry if that offended you in any way," he said, but not an ounce of remorse could be seen on his face.

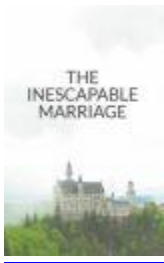
YOU'LL ALSO LIKE



Error 404

27M1M

Rebel Simmons was just a girl who was dealt a shitty hand in the game of life. Despite her harsh and abusive upbringing, she worked hard, and studied harder. With an IQ...



THE INESCAPABLE MARRIAGE

73.1K798

BEEP... BEEP.. The alarm clock struck at 5:00 AM . She rose hurriedly and started with her daily chores with perfection But something was strange in her . was she a pe...



Sombre

282K7.4K

When thirteen year old Alicia's marriage is fixed to a sixteen year old boy called Preston, she thinks nothing about it. But when she meets him on her twentieth birthday...



Laurie | 18+

3.9M67.6K

(18+) "When you cry I'll kiss away your tears and if you wake up with nightmares I'll fuck them all away." Nimfa has studied every inch of the human heart...



LET ME HATE YOU

354K13.8K

Ever wonder how your supposed best day of life will turn into a lifelong nightmare. Two people, two different worlds yet bound by the same emotion, "HATE" and...



Alpha Kane

[10.7M302K](#)

[At the age of 31 Alpha Kane Locus Black had given up on looking for his mate, since the age of 18 it was all he wanted, now at 31 he was cold, scary and distant Alpha to...](#)



[dark romance](#)

[13.2K193](#)

[you'll find all the dark romance stories in this book](#)

Only 11 days remaining, she thought when the day ended.

The absence of her parents and Abram's constant presence around her was taking a toll on her newfound resolutions. The more she was trying to stay out of his way, the more he was attracting her attention.

Every day, it became her duty to get him his coffee like his personal assistant, however, he never tries to pass any remark

over her dressing. Although he acted like an ass, when it came to working, Maira was surprised to learn new things from him. She knew one thing for sure, he was appointed as an assistant vice president based on his talent and knowledge, but how? Why didn't she know that before?

7 more days to go, she was counting.

That day when Abram was walking near the coffee room, he heard someone's voice which halted his steps.

"Umm....." Maira was moaning. It went on for a few more seconds. Abram's knuckles turned white while holding the doorknob. He was seconds away from barging in and tearing them.

"That was so good, Elijah," Maira said, and with that Abram left fearing he might kill Maira in his rage.

"Do you think she will like it?" Elijah said.

"Like it? She will love it. It's her favorite dish and I can't stop myself from eating more. Can I have another one to taste, Please?" Maira said with a pout.

"No, I gave you to taste it, not to eat it," Elijah said while closing the box.

"Fine, I never knew you could cook so well," Maira complimented Elijah.

"Well, Love makes you do all crazy things," Elijah replied, making Maira laugh.

It was only after lunch that Maira returned to the cabin only to witness the room to be in chaos. Abram was sitting on his chair with his arms on the armrest while his head rested on his intertwined hands, his laptop, and all the documents shattered all over the floor.

She had seen him in anger many times during their marriage, however, the scene before her made her shudder. She felt the air around her was hard to breathe and was tiptoeing to exit the room when she heard him yell, making her flinch, "Take another step and you won't like what will happen next."

She froze and unknown fear crept in. *Why am I afraid? I didn't do anything.* She thought.

She is not what she portrays, Abram.

Don't go by her innocent looks.

I have seen her with men many times.

Going office is just an excuse for her, she goes out to meet her boyfriend

All the memories flashed before him.

"Where were you?" he asked Maira in a menacing tone.

The way he calmly asked the question looked like the silence before the storm, Maira was comprehending whether she should be submissive or it was one such incident where she had to act strong. Her silence was fueling his fury. He again asked, but this time with a raised voice, "I asked where were you?"

"It was lunchtime, where would you expect me to be?" Maira was holding her breath.

BANG!

What remained there on the desk came crashing and the next second Abram stood in front of her.

With his proximity and his threatening aura, Maira took two steps backward irking Abram. He grabbed her roughly by her forearm and pulled her closer to him. Looking straight into her tearful eyes he said, "If you need a man, you can come to me anytime, is it necessary for you to whore around in the office too?"

Once his words ring a bell to Maira, the welled up eyes start falling. She gasps with the physical and emotional pain as well. She wanted to hit him, punch him, but his iron grip on her was making her feel helpless.

"Let go of me," she stammered. It was a big thing for her to even finish her sentence while she was going through the

agony. Agony with his accusation. Agony for calling her a whore indirectly.

1

"Why? Aren't you satisfied with him? I can satisfy you right here, right now," Abram said while breathing through his clenched teeth.

He pushed her on the nearby couch before hovering over her. "What's wrong with you, listen to me first," Maira was defending herself before he could attack her and before things could turn for the worse.

"Listen to you? I heard it from my ear what you were doing in that damn coffee room with that bastard, quite a show that was, wasn't it? Or do you prefer him over me?" The memory of that night came flashing over her mind. She felt insulted, she felt humiliated, she felt scared, she felt helpless. Before Abram could do more damage she freaked out and said, "nothing happened there, okay? Hear me out first." She was sobbing while trying to defend herself.

Her tiny hands were a hurdle to his advancement and in a swift move, he pinned them beside her head.

"Abram, I beg you don't do anything irrational, okay? Please listen to me, we were just..." she was interrupted by Abram,

"we were just what Maira, do you think you can fool me every time and I will let go of it like always?"

"Please," she hiccupped, " for God's sake, check the CCTV."

Elevator

It was lunchtime and the entire floor was empty. If anyone has witnessed what was happening in the cabin, Maira would have been doomed. When Abram heard the word CCTV and saw her beneath him shivering, his sanity overcame his possessive beast. He got up from the couch and moved away from her as far he could, meanwhile she immediately got up and ran out of the cabin.

Remorse, guilt, resentment was all Abram felt when he saw the footage, though there was no audio to it, with Maira's expression he could make out she was enjoying the taste of the food and moaned, that precise movement Abram happened to hear her.

I love you, but I am scared of your anger.

Don't be Maira, I will never hurt you.

You become a different person when you get angry and I only feel fear for you Abram.

I am very possessive about you, I can't help but get angry if anyone touches you.

You ought to have trust in me.

I trust you more than myself, but you are naive, you don't know how men can be animals.

Maira has locked up again in one of the washroom cubicles. Her silent tears and quivering body were telling the ordeal she just faced. The more she tried to stop her tears from falling the more miserably it continued.

She startled when someone knocked, "Mam, are you ok? You are in for a long time, should I call someone?" the housekeeping lady called out.

"Yes, I am fine. I just need...time, don't worry," Maira replied in her shaky voice.

After a while, she came out of the cubicle and without turning back went straight to her home. On the way, she called Sharon to inform Shantanu about her not feeling well.

"What happened to you? Are you feeling better now?" Sharon inquired while Maira was passing the teacup to her and Elijah.

"Yes, I am alright, I was missing Momma and Dadda, and also I couldn't focus on work so came early."

It was unusual for Maira to leave the office in the mid and the couple went to check on her. Maira was disturbed by Abram's attack, but she couldn't tell Elijah or Sharon. Elijah was a man of pride and if he gets to know how Abram feels about him, he would surely leave the office, not before punching the shit out of Abram. How Sharon will react to it was another story.

"Can you stay tonight?" Maira asked Sharon.

"Sure babe, but you have to cook dinner, I ain't doing that shit," Sharon smirked, making Maira laugh.

Sharon and Elijah shared a look when Maira went to the kitchen. Something happened which she is not telling.

Abram knew he went overboard, he should have asked her before pounding on her like a beast. Not only his behavior was unacceptable, but he also didn't even comprehend they were in office.

Why does she affect me so much, I am anyway, leaving her, why can't I see her with someone else? These were the only thoughts in his mind. He was rehearsing what was the best way to apologize to her, yes, for a change he set his ego aside and planned to apologize, however, he came to know she left early on account of poor health.

She must be disturbed. All my fault, shit.

When he stopped his car outside her home, he saw Elijah walking down her apartment.

"Of course, now you have him," Abram sneered and drove away. He came to apologize, but seeing Elijah, he changed his mind. Abram was unaware he came along with Sharon.

And I thought I should let my ego aside and apologize, whereas she is busy with her new boyfriend. Stop acting like a love lost

puppy, get over your divorce, and end this story for once and for all. It's good for both of us. He thought.

The next day, Maira was dreading to face Abram, but to her surprise, Shantanu took the responsibility to train her. Her day went well, not having to see or meet Abram. Oblivious to Maira, Abram decided to leave her alone for the greater good and rather pose as her superior.

1

Even he was clueless why he wanted her to be around him, or to be more precise, why was he getting attracted to her with all that happened in the past between them and it was him who proposed the divorce, not the other way around.

A day before the presentation, Maira was doing her last-minute preparation unaware of someone else's presence. Since it would be late for her, she asked her friends to leave before her. Abram was also in his cabin, as he didn't have much to do in his lonely apartment, he was used to staying for longer hours in his cabin.

After she was satisfied with her presentation she called it a night and walked towards the elevator. By the time she reached, the doors were about to close. Before she could press the button to call for the elevator, it opened on its own. She stepped inside and raised her head to thank whoever halted

the elevator for her. To her horror, she found it to be none other than Abram and before she could step out, the elevator door was closed.

She never knew a few seconds in the elevator could be so long, in her haste to step out of the lift she was tapping her left foot. This was something she would do out of nervousness and was something Abram was aware of. He chose to remain silent. *Well, that is for the best of both of us,* he thought.

Nevertheless, the elevator halted abruptly, jerking both of them from their original position. The next minute, the light flickered, making Maira scream. After a few seconds, the light in the elevator was completely turned off.

2

She started hyperventilating and closed her eyes in fear. She was claustrophobic and the darkness was fuelling her misery. She moved to the corner and slouched on the floor, covering her face with her palms. To her misery there came a ray, a ray of hope when Abram turned his phone's flashlight on and sat beside her.

"Maira, listen to my voice, take a deep breath with me," he said while holding her in his arms and rubbing her back gently.

She clung to his coat and buried her face in his neck.

"Good catty, now breathe out."

Maira followed his instruction diligently, though it seems to work as her breathing came out as normal, she was still scared.

Once her breathing came out as normal, Abram immediately called for the emergency team and waited for their action. However, Maira's trembling body was his priority for the moment. She could have panic attacks due to her phobia.

"Remember the time when we went out for our first date before marriage?" Abram said, to which Maira nodded, still nuzzling his neck.

"You told me you don't want to marry me and I said ok, but deep down I was scared because the moment I saw you that day, I fell in love with you and I wanted to spend my entire life with you."

Maira replied "I thought you were forced to marry a girl like me" in her quavering voice which went inaudible to Abram.

"Do you think that was cliché?" he added to which Maira nodded however with his warmth and her exhaustion made her eyes droop and she slowly went into slumber.

He chuckled hearing she answered honestly, even in her current condition, however, it turned into a pang of sadness. "I was scared to lose you then and am still scared to lose you now. I thought I could live without you, but truth to be told I can't live without you. All these months were just a sheer

torment for me and nothing else. But I know you can't live with a person like me and more than the love I want your happiness, even if it means me out of your life."

He hugged her as if his life was depending on it and when her hand holding his coat dropped he realized she was in deep sleep and didn't hear his confession.

Tattoo

"It's good that you didn't hear me. It's better if you hate me," he mumbled

After some time, the elevator door opened, and they were safely pulled out by the emergency team. Abram put Maira on the passenger seat and contemplated whether to wake her or take her to his apartment. Rejecting both the options, he called Sharon.

"As far as I hate to see you, I appreciate you saving her and brought her to my place," Sharon scoffed at Abram, who was laying Maira on the bed.

"Trust me, Ms. Addison, the feeling is mutual," and with that, he left.

When Maira woke up the next day, she felt tired. She wondered how she ended up in Sharon's apartment. It was not until Sharon shrieked that she realized she was late for the office, and it was an important day for her. With no time left to go back to her home and change, Sharon offered her one of her dresses.

"Umm, I appreciate your help, but your dresses are way too much for me, Sharon. Either the length is short or the neckline or the sleeves," Maira said while rustling in her closet.

"Do you have a choice?" Sharon said with a raised eyebrow.

Finally, Maira chose a black jumpsuit with short sleeves; the only problem was the deep neckline at the back. To look professional in her chic attire, Maira chose a loose messy bun with black studs.

"Oh, you are growing sexier day by day," Sharon complimented her friend, who was already feeling embarrassed.

Meanwhile, Abram was busier than his usual days as today was the decision-making day for the client, and he was representing his company. His day started with a meet with his company's leaders, then followed by a meet with Shantanu on any last-minute preparation from their end. Then he had to receive foreign clients and was to have lunch with them.

He couldn't sleep last night due to emotional exhaustion, recollecting his time spent with Maira, and with his tight schedule, he was running out of his patience. He was walking briskly with Shantanu in the corridor when he noticed Maira and her dress.

Is she giving a presentation or what? he thought

He asked Shantanu to carry on and went to talk to Maira, "What are you wearing, Ms. Noor? I am sure the client will already be attentive. You don't have to draw their attention."

Maira, who first was startled by his presence, composed herself and said, "I am perfectly aligned with the company's dress code Mr. Ali. Now, if you excuse me, I have some work."

Before she could walk, he dragged her by her elbow to a corner and said in a low voice, "Maira, it's not the time to argue. Change your dress now," he was noticing the gaze she was getting from her male colleagues.

After that day, Maira was afraid of his sudden outburst or proximity. Afraid that he would do something impulsive, she just nodded. Abram opened his mouth to say something, but seeing her submissive, he left.

Although she nodded her head, she had no other way to deal with the dress issue except to continue with it. Before going to lunch with the client, Abram once again checked with Maira for her attire and lost his temper when she was still roaming around, looking hot in black, attracting unwanted gaze.

He sent a message to her as a last resort, "change that damn dress before I do something you won't like."

Meanwhile, Maira, who felt sleepy since morning, reached the conference room way before her time. She decided to take a power nap before the presentation. It was during that time Abram noticed her sleeping alone, and an evil grin appeared on his face.

The conference room was aligned with a conjoined desk in a semicircle, the center of which held a stage and a projector. The employees took the farthest seats and succeeded by the senior management; meanwhile, the front seats were filled with foreign clients and Abram.

When Maira came on the stage, she was anxious and nervous. Maira was a confident woman when it comes to working, but this was something she never did before, and she was both excited and nervous at the same time. She frowned with uncertainty when Abram gave her a devilish smirk.

1

The presentation's start seemed to be going well, but when she turned around to look at the projector screen, the silence in the room was disturbed by gasps and sudden murmuring among the employees. When Maira noticed the disturbance, she first looked at Abram, who was giving her the same 'I told you so' look, then she looked at Sharon, who had a shocked expression on her face.

It was Abram who spoke and requested everyone to focus on the presentation. Although skeptical, Maira continued with her presentation, which ended up with a round of applause from everyone. Once the conference was over, an angry-looking Sharon grabbed her and dragged her to the washroom.

"What's wrong with you?" she asked angrily.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this," with that, Sharon turned Maira around against the mirror, and what Maira saw shocked her. Abram's name was tattooed on her back, and all the while, people could see it.

"I...I don't know. Honestly, I didn't do it," Maira mumbled, looking at Sharon.

Something clicked Maira. Abram had a hobby of tattooing, and with the way his name was written, it was no doubt it was him. Before Maira could utter his name, Sharon said, "Let me guess, it was that asshole husband of yours who did this."

Maira's head was spinning with all the happening, the sudden murmuring during the presentation, now the gossip would have spread like a fire in the office, and this was something Maira was dreading about, being popular for the wrong reasons, and it was all because of Abram.

Think rationally, Maira, before losing your anger, her conscience said.

"Sharon, do me a favor and remove his name from my back," Maira said while grabbing a tissue and giving it to Sharon.

No matter how much they tried, it causes zero difference to his name. Due to the rough rubbing, her back turned red; still, the

name was intact. Furious over making a fool of her in front of the office and the client, she lost her last strand of composure. Letting go of her messy bun, she let her long hair cover her back. She marched towards his cabin in a fury.

Zara

"How dare you!" Maira barged into his cabin without knocking.

Along with Abram, there was Shantanu and one more senior of her sitting.

"You guys carry on, for now, I'll get back to you later," he waved at them, not before leaving; Shantanu gave a questioning look to Maira, who chose to ignore.

"Next time, don't forget to knock on the door," Abram said coolly.

"To hell with you and your order, how dare you tattoo your name on me?" she said while banging her hand on his desk.

"I told you to change your dress, or you will not like what happens next, see; now you can't blame me. I gave a fair share of warning," Abram smirked while leaning back in his chair.

"Who are you to tell me what I should do or shouldn't do?" Maira said while glaring at him.

"As per law, I am still your husband, and I can tell you what's right and what's wrong," he said while standing from his chair and walked towards her.

"Fuck you."

"Oh, trust me, baby, I would love to get fucked by you," he said while sitting on the desk in front of her and looking at furious Maira.

Having enough of him, Maira raised her hand to slap him; however, Abram was quick enough to grab her hand and caged her in his arms.

"Easy there, tigress, I won't do that if I were you," though he said calmly, there was a warning in his words.

"Let go of me," Maira yelled and was pushing him away from her, but in vain. Tears of anger already welled up in her eye. Her unusual red face made her look like an angry kitten, harmless yet ready to attack.

"Let go of me before I start shouting," she threatened, hearing which, Abram grasps her more tightly and replied, "Go ahead." Now her body was completely rubbing against his hard chest where she could feel his body warm beneath his shirt. This warmth gave her a reason to fear.

Seeing him passive, Maira's anger was depleting and was soon replaced by fear which was evident on her face.

"Now that you are in a position to listen, we can talk."

"First of all, the dress you are wearing, did you see how men were drooling over your body? Second of all, yes, I tattooed my

name with a marker because I want them to stay away from what's mine," he said without any remorse or guilt.

"I am not your property," she sneered.

"And regarding my dress intentionally, I wore it to attract new customers. Remember you said I am a whore who sleeps around men, so why are you getting upset now?" She growled at him and herself for going so low in her anger to call her a whore.

With her reply, Abram snapped, "Let's see who will dare to lay his hand on you." He fists her hair, making her throw her head back in pain, and starts sucking and kissing on her neck. At first, she didn't understand, but when she realized the situation, she started punching him on his chest while yelling at him to stop.

2

The tears that welled up already started flowing swiftly. Abram stopped planting his marks on her neck when he tasted something salty on her neck and noticed she was crying. He raised her head only to witness her helpless state. Already guilt-ridden, he heard her say, "Why did you stop? go on, go on, embarrass me, hurt me, humiliate me."

The mixture of her sobs and hiccups was making it difficult for her to talk or to even breathe, but she continued, "I am very

tired now, Abram, what is that you want from me? Why are you doing this to me? What have I ever done to you?"

"I..I..," Abram was speechless with her direct questions and for the fact that she called him Abram instead of his surname. He loosens his grip on her and walks away from her.

"I just want you to be safe from those hungry animals looking at you with lust," he said while raking his hair.

2

"What were you doing just now? Marking me as your whore?" Maira said with teary eyes staring at him directly.

Her accusing eyes were throwing a dagger into his heart, and unable to tolerate it, he left the cabin not before saying "Sorry."

"I will beat the shit out of him. What does he think of himself?" Sharon was yelling at the top of her voice, ready to attack while Elijah was trying to hold her in one place.

"Baby, calm down, look after Maira first," he tried convincing her.

"Maira, Oh Maira, I am so sorry baby, how are you feeling now?" Sharon's anger subsides a little on seeing pitiful Maira. The onlookers were giving them a strange look and immediately dispersed when Sharon yelled, "What are you looking at? Dumbheads"

The news about Abram's name on Maira's back spread in the office, which earned questioning stares from people around her. Though Sharon helped her conceal the hickeys on her neck and the tattoo, which Abram did with a permanent marker making it difficult to erase, however, she can't undo the damage that already happened.

2

Meanwhile, Abram was thinking of ways to undo the damage but in vain. He was not concerned about his image; however, he knew it would get difficult for Maira.

He sighs at his impulsive action, which led both of them into complicated shit. The more he thought of steering clear of any complication in their soon-to-be-divorced relation, he found his action would make the matter more intangible. He had no regrets in thinking of keeping Maira safe from her colleague drooling over her, but he regretted how he chose to make her understand.

Why are you so concerned about your cheating ex-wife? Hasn't she done that before, having an affair behind your back? Karma is returning what she has sown. His bad side reminded him.

She got her new boyfriend who will take care of everything for her as he did before.

"Yes, she doesn't need me to solve the issue, though I created it, it was for her good, she didn't listen," he spoke to no one.

You are scared, Abram, his good side said, you are scared to know that she already got someone who loves her more than you do, and that's why you are doing all this. Take ownership of what you did.

You are scared that Elijah will steal her away from you, and that's why you wanted everybody to know she belonged to you. Isn't it the reason you tattooed your name?

"Yes, so what? Legally she is still my wife, and she dares to hook up with that guy," he said again to no one.

Don't claim her. Love her if you love her.

"What about her betrayal to me? She even got pregnant with his child and claimed it to be mine. I would have forgiven her if she told me the truth and repented. I love her, dammit. I would have accepted her with all her flaws."

"And you can't deny her betrayal. I have all the evidence."

His inner turmoil was interrupted by a call. His sour mood immediately turned into a smile seeing the caller's number.

"Zara, what a pleasant surprise?"

Movie time

"Abram, don't you dare Zara me now, I was waiting for you at the airport, and you forgot to pick me up."

"No, listen..." Abram was interrupted when the call got disconnected abruptly.

He sighed when his call was disconnected every time he called. Eventually, he had to call his mother, "Ma, please give the phone to Zara."

"How could you forget to pick her up? You can not talk to her," with that, the call again got disconnected.

What's wrong with women nowadays, he rolled his eyes.

Since the transit of the new client went smoothly, Abram left early to visit her mother and also to ask for forgiveness from Zara. Meanwhile, Maira was at the receiving end of all the harsh comments, with people calling her vixen in sheep disguise. Some also commented that the reason for her sudden change in the dressing was Abram's attention.

"Guess what? After putting you in this situation, that son of a bitch left early," Sharon said.

All the time, Maira was quiet. She was aware of the change in people's attitude towards her, but she was emotionally drained out, and all of a sudden, she was feeling drowsy.

Maybe I need a nice sleep to recover, she thought.

"Let's go for a movie tonight, anyway; we need to celebrate the success of her presentation," Elijah suggested.

"Sure, after all, she deserved all the applause for her hard work, unlike a few lazy scumbags who know nothing but to degrade someone," she yelled to let her scheming colleague know.

Meanwhile, Abram was persuading angry Zara, "I am sorry, I was swamped in the office today. How about I take you out tomorrow for a lavish dinner at your favorite restaurant?"

Zara pretended Abram was not there at all and was talking to his mother, Ruby, "Ruby aunty, there is a new movie out tonight. Will you go with me? After all, it's my favorite hero movie." "How many times I told you to call me mom or Ma like Abram," Ruby corrected her. "Hey, you guys are ignoring me. I am here," Abram whined. "Now, how does it feel to be ignored?" Zara huffed. "I swear, your husband will have a headache tolerating your tantrum," before he could stop himself, he blurted out, mentally slapping himself.

"That's why he left me for an obedient woman, and you know who it was," Zara said with a sad smile and ran to her room.

"Look what you did? Do you have to remind her again about them?" Ruby scolded her son.

"Along with Zara, I am also one of the victims Ma," Abram couldn't help but sigh.

"That's why I think both of you are suitable for each other, she is also a divorcee, and I love that girl for long, but I don't know what your father saw in that vixen and got you married to her," Ruby said with scorn.

"Ma, not again, that's why I don't come and meet you. You always try to get us hitched. She is and will always be my best friend and nothing else." With that, he stood up and walked to Zara's room.

"Can I come in?" Abram said while peeking into the room and saw Zara standing near the window.

When she didn't reply, he went in and said, "I am sorry about that, Zara, please don't take it to your heart."

"Am I that bad, Abi, that he left me for another woman who was married?" she asked out of the blue.

"Where did that come from? The Zara I know is a confident girl who doesn't need others' opinions. She is beautiful with a set of most beautiful blue eyes any man can fall for, and oh, that smile of hers, gosh, can melt any stone-hearted person. And the best part about her is she has a beautiful heart who cares about others."

"Then why was I not enough for him?" she said with tearful eyes.

"Zara, you have to move on now. You can get any guy," Abram was interrupted when she said, "But I only want him, I only love him."

"Let's go out and watch a movie, your stupid hero movie. Popcorn and cold drink free, my treat," Abram said to lighten her mood.

"Don't dare call my favorite hero stupid. Don't flatter me with only popcorn; I want nachos too."

"Of course, because of you and your dad's recommendation, I got this job. How can I flatter daddy's princess with only popcorn," he said while faking a bow.

"Well, this is just the beginning, my dear bestie. I am gonna make you spend till you are left with no penny," she laughed. With that, both left for the movie.

"Oh, I am so excited. I have been waiting for his movie to release," Sharon squealed in excitement, clapping her hands while Maira and Elijah shared a look.

Suddenly, Sharon said, "On second thought, let's go for dinner instead of a movie," she laughed nervously.

"Why, what.....," Maira stopped in between when she saw Abram walking with Zara, and both were laughing like a cute couple. The moment Maira saw them, Zara was falling, and Abram saved her holding her as if she was his precious toy. Oblivious to Maira, someone knocked Zara from behind, and if not for Abram, she could have fallen on her face.

"Yes, let's go for pizza. I am famished," Maira said with a fake smile.

"Babe, are you sure you want another pizza?" Sharon said, looking uncertainly at the sobbing Maira.

"Now, can't I even eat what I want to eat," Maira cried.

"But that's your second pizza," Sharon retorted, making Maira cry harder.

1

"She is joking Maira, if you want, you can order anything you want to eat," Elijah said while narrowing his eyes at Sharon to warn her.

"I think when she is sad, she likes to eat," Sharon whispered to Elijah, who was looking thoughtfully at Maira.

"Yes, I want french fries," Maira said while taking a burp and wiping her tears.

Late night dinner

The dinner went with Maira, eating like a pig, and Sharon and Elijah just looking at her change in appetite. Eventually, Sharon volunteered to stay at Maira's house.

It was only in the morning that Maira's mood was refreshing, and she looked happy.

"I just needed a good sleep with all the stress of the presentation," she said, smiling at Sharon.

She was unusually beaming at everyone at the office, causing Sharon to have a concerned look on her face, but then she thought it was good for Maira to let bygones be bygones and start afresh.

The reason for Maira's happy mood was the absence of Abram. Overall, the day went exceptionally well for her, except for the harsh comment she received wherever she went.

"Who wouldn't try to seduce a handsome boss like him? She is not exceptional, always acts pious but showed her true color."

"She is no match to Abram. Look at him, tall and handsome, she, just ordinary."

In the next few days, Maira was appreciated by the senior management for her presentation, and her promotion as manager was announced after a gap of a week.

"Of course, she used other means to get her promotion."

"No wonder, with her tactics, she got promoted within two years of joining"

Maira got to hear all this when news of her promotion went out. At first, she felt bad, but then she remembered Elijah's words, *'Don't look at yourself from someone else's eyes if you can't respect yourself, how can you expect others to respect you.'*

"I am so proud of my girl," Rayan was beaming on the other side of the call.

"I told you, Dadda, it's time for me to rise," Maira said on the phone while walking in the corridor.

She could hear Rhea yell in the background, congratulating her.

"Dadda put the phone on speaker," Maira said all of a sudden, and after getting the affirmation, she shouted, "Hey Rhea, Dadda loves me more than you," with that, Rayan immediately disconnected the call; however, the damage was already done. Maira was laughing at her father's childish act when she saw Abram standing in front of her.

Her smile immediately vanished, and scorn appeared in its place. She was walking away from him when he heard her say, "congratulations," to which she replied with a curt thanks.

"What are we going to have for lunch?" Maira questions Sharon.

Sharon rolled her eyes and said, "It's only 11 in the morning, Maira."

"Well, I skip my breakfast; you can't blame me," Maira said, making a puppy face.

"Fine, let's go to the pantry and see if we could get you some snacks."

Maira beamed happily, but soon her happiness turned sour when she was told to report to her new boss for her new job, who happened to be Abram. Earlier it was Shantanu to whom she was supposed to report, but now she had to directly report to Abram, much to her dismay.

"Welcome on board, Ms. Noor, and congratulations on your new job," Abram said in his monotone.

"First thing first, I want..." Abram stopped when he saw distracted Maira gazing lustfully at the muffins placed on his desk.

"Ms. Noor?"

"If you are not eating, can I have a bite of those muffins?" Maira asked out of the blue while Abram was taken aback.

"Well, all yours," the moment he said so, Maira dived to grab the muffins.

She moaned involuntarily, making Abram uneasy. Listening to her moans was causing a bulge between his thighs.

He gulped hard. However, Maira noticed his silence and said, "I am sorry I missed my breakfast and couldn't help but ask."

"You can carry on; Shantanu will train you further" with that, he dismissed her before going into the restroom for his release.

2

Maira never knew her life would become hectic with her new job. Not only it drained her out of energy, but she was getting to spend less time with Elijah and Sharon. Soon she had to travel alone and was missing the comfort of Sharon's car. It became a usual thing for her to come to the office early and leave at later hours.

There were times when she would doze off at her desk; however, someone considerate would always keep a cup of warm tea at her desk during her sleep time.

"Yes, Dadda, I am fine. It's just the work has increased," Maira was yawning while talking to her dad.

"No, I am leaving the office and going home. I will call you tomorrow" when she ended the call, she felt dizzy and had to lean on the nearby wall for support.

1

"Ms. Noor?" Maira doesn't have to look up to see who it was; she already knew.

"Mr. Ali, do you need something?" she said, keeping her eyes closed.

"Are you okay? You looked pale," Abram said with concern.

She started crying, "No, I am not getting proper sleep and proper food. I miss Momma and Dadda."

Why am I crying that too in front of him? she thought but couldn't stop herself from crying.

6

Abram scratched his head, not knowing what he was supposed to reply." Well, you want to go out for late dinner?" he asked to make her stop crying.

"Yes," she whispered.

"But why are you crying, are you hurt anywhere?" Abram had to ask, seeing her nonstop cries.

1

"I don't know, I just want to eat something," she said, hiccuping.

Abram was confused at her strange behavior. He wasn't expecting a yes from her when he asked for dinner, he thought she would retort and say something sarcastic, but this was new to him. He watched her closely when she was ogling at her ice cream before eating it ruthlessly.

"Unusual thing to have for dinner," Abram murmured while offering his ice cream to her. Both didn't talk during their time together.

By the time he paid the bill and started the engine, he heard her snoring lightly. She only stirs in her sleep when he tries to wake her up.

Should I take her to her place or Sharon's place? He thought.

However, after one look at her parted lips, he changed his mind, and he only stopped at his apartment's parking. Maira was in a deep sleep and didn't budge even when he carried her to his bedroom. His lonely apartment suddenly felt warm to him. The same dull bedroom looked lively for him. He was exhausted from his day's work, but he just wanted to keep looking at sleeping, Maira.

After taking a cold shower to let his burning desire extinguish, he came out. He was still fidgeting with the thought of sleeping on the same bed or the couch in the living room.

We are legally married; why shouldn't I? He thought and lay on the bed. The next moment, sensing a warmth beside her, Maira wrapped her arms around his waist while nuzzling in his chest, catching him off guard.

He smiled, looking at her tired form where she was not aware of her closeness with him and thinking about the possible scenario of how she would react to finding herself with him alone. He kissed her forehead and wrapped his arm around her tiny waist before falling asleep.

Shopping

Abram dreamt of a surreal place, completely calm and quiet. He saw a tiny kitten hiding underneath a tree, and when it saw him, it crawled back.

"It's ok, I won't hurt you," he said while walking towards it without breaking eye contact with it. Slowly the kitten got comfortable with him and was nuzzling its head on his shoulder. Suddenly it started moving violently, hitting him with its tiny claws.

Abram tried to relax it, but he snapped when it said, "leave me." He was stunned to see an animal talking like a woman, then he felt something like a sting on his cheek. When his eyes snapped, he saw an angry-looking Maira caged between his arms.

"Mr. Ali, how dare you? if you don't leave me right now, I will report it as sexual harassment."

He smiled at her furious form with disheveled hair, making her resemble the same kitten he saw in his dream. He stirred, still holding Maira in his arms, and moved up on her, startling her, "You came here of your own will; go ahead and report. The apartment here is CCTV monitored, plus legally we are husband and wife." He paused for a few seconds staring at Maira and pulling her closer to him, "and it's normal to share a bed."

Maira's heart rate was already accelerating since the moment she saw herself wrapped in his arm, and to top it off, he was bare-chested. With his soul penetrating gaze, it was difficult for her to come up with a counter-attack, her mouth was opening and closing in an attempt to speak, but no words came out.

She gasped when she felt his hand over her belly, and she started crying in fear. Fear of again losing herself to desire, a fear of him calling her a whore again, a fear he would do anything that she won't be able to stop, fear of helplessness.

2

"Please, I beg you," she started begging.

"Hey, it's ok. I am not going to do anything" with that, he moved away from her.

"You can use this bathroom. I will go in another one" with that, Abram left disoriented Maira.

When he freshened up and returned to check on Maira, she was still hovering in the same spot.

"How...why am I here? Whose place is this? What happened last night?" she fired the questions that were plaguing her.

Abram remembered the first thing she wants in the morning was tea. He was also the one who used to keep tea on her desk whenever she takes a nap. He was holding two cups of tea,

placing one on the bedside table, and said, "You were feeling dizzy last night, and after having ice cream for dinner, you dozed off in my car. I was also tired, so I got you here, in my apartment."

"Why didn't you wake me up?" she immediately asked.

"I did. You didn't budge a bit."

He waited for her to say more, but she was lost in thoughts. After a while, Abram broke the silence, "Have tea and freshen up. I will drop you at your place."

Maira was relieved, noticing it was Sunday. She could not comprehend what she was feeling, she should be afraid to be with Abram alone in his apartment, but she doesn't want to leave. She felt tired, as if she had not gotten sleep for a long time though she just woke up.

When Abram came to call her for breakfast, he found her to be sleeping again.

Maybe she was tired with the workload, he thought before closing the door.

1

Maira woke up with a jolt. When she observed her surroundings, the reality hit her like a thunderbolt.

What is wrong with me? How can I sleep knowing he was in the same house? She mentally scolds herself.

She was rushing out of bed but stopped when she saw the door opening, and Abram stood with a tray of food.

"Good that you woke up. I was about to wake you for lunch."

"What time is it?" she asked.

"4 in the afternoon."

"I need to go home. I can't stay here," she jumped out of bed now when her brain seemed to be awake.

"You didn't eat anything, eat first, and then I will drop up."

"No, I don't need your concern. You are not my babysitter," she yelled, startling Abram.

"You are going nowhere without eating anything," Abram had to yell back.

"Okay, but why are you yelling at me?" Maira said with tearful eyes.

7

"You..." Abram was speechless at her random change of mood.

He kept looking at her with narrowed eyes; he couldn't understand a minute ago, she was yelling at him, and now she was eating obediently without resistance. As promised, he

dropped her at her place, and again he was surprised when she let him.

She is driving me nuts, he thought before starting his car.

The nights after were a new kind of torture for Abram as he started missing her cuddles he shared with her the other night. With each passing day, the desire to hold her was getting stronger, and no matter how much he tried to remember the past, her betrayal, her affair, nothing seems to justify anything.

On the other hand, Maira was missing her parents, but she couldn't ask them to come back knowing Rhea is pregnant and needs lots of support. Though she tried to relax in Sharon's company, she started missing something that she couldn't figure out.

"You have your next hearing in a week," her mother reminded her once on a call.

Maira completely forgot about it and felt her chest constraint on thinking they would soon be divorced. No matter how much she tried to be strong, her defense mechanism seems to be out on vacation. She finds herself crying most of the time for no reason, and being clueless about her own emotions made her cry harder.

"I am not taking a no for an answer. Tomorrow is the office party, and we are going," Sharon said.

"I don't feel like going," Maira replied.

"Why, are you chickening out because of him?" Sharon mocked.

Maira frowned with her friend's taunt, "fine then, let's get it done."

"Do we have to go shopping again?" Maira whined while Sharon was dragging her inside a shop

"Yes, what are you planning to wear for tomorrow, your pajamas?"

"Maira?" someone called her name. Maira was surprised and said, "Daniel?"

1

"Oh, it's you, long time no see," Daniel smiled.

"Yeah, long time, how are you and...," Maira stopped in her tracks.

"Well, I am good. I came back for my sister's wedding; what about you?"

Just then, Elijah entered the shop after parking his car and looking out for them.

"Elijah?" Daniel called out.

"Daniel? Oh man, Daniel, is that you?"

"Do you guys know each other?" Maira questioned.

'Of course, from my business days, we worked together for a business deal," Elijah said.

"I am sorry to hear about your sister and your business loss, too," Daniel said with sympathy.

"How do you know Maira?" Elijah asked in return.

"Well," both Maira and Daniel fell into an awkward silence.

"He was my restaurant partner and was my best friend," their conversation was broken by Abram's angry voice.

The Party

Sharon rolled her eyes. *Why does he have to have a dramatic entry?*

Daniel turned around and noticed along with Abram there stood frozen Zara, "Abram," he rolled out his name with a nod. His friendly smile turned into a cold gaze when he saw them together.

"Let's go," Sharon nudged Maira sensing the awkward situation.

"Oh, so you met Maira finally, you must be happy to see her," Abram said to Daniel with scorn.

Daniel chuckled, "I should be asking you that question. You must be so happy to be with Zara."

"Abi, let's go. We don't want to create a scene here," Zara, who till now was silent, was pulling Abram.

"Oh, I thought you loved to create a scene, Zara, after all, that's what daddy's princess does, play with people," Daniel said with disdain.

"Don't cross your limit, Dan; otherwise, I will forget we were once best friends," Abram said with a raised voice.

"Don't flatter yourself Abi, we were never best friends. Best friends don't hurt each other," Daniel said.

"Abi, if you don't come with me right now, I swear I will hurt myself," Zara whispered to agitated Abram.

2

Abram has no other option left but not before giving a long glare to Maira.

"And they say girls can't get along with each other," Sharon said, rolling her eyes over what happened just now.

"Maira, I am sorry for everything, and Elijah, let's catch up sometimes. I will be here for another two weeks," with that, Daniel left, leaving confused Maira behind.

"Why does he appear everywhere we go?" Sharon said.

Maira was lost in her thoughts. *Why did Daniel say sorry to me? What happened between Abram and Daniel all of a sudden? Why did he say best friends don't hurt each other? Is that the reason why Abram started working leaving his restaurant?*

"Hello, are you here?" Maira was brought out of her trance when Sharon jerked her.

Ignoring Sharon, Maira asked Elijah, "What do you know about Daniel?"

Elijah, too was thinking about the altercation between Daniel and Abram. He replied, "We mostly talk about business

whenever we met, but I remember he once excused my offer for dinner, saying he got plans with his two best friends."

"Later, I heard he moved to a different country due to some reason, that's all."

"It's strange; they were not only best friends but more like brothers. Daniel always supported Abram in his dream to run his restaurant, and today what I saw is completely different. It's like they would kill each other given a chance, and what does he mean best friends don't hurt each other?" Maira said.

"Don't stress yourself thinking about their personal affairs," Sharon said. The discussion ended there, and Sharon helped reluctant Maira choose an emerald green gown with a knee-length slit. It was a V-neck gown emblem with black stones near the neckline with long sleeves.

Meanwhile, in the car, Abram was furious seeing Zara crying. He couldn't explain the feeling he had when he saw Maira talking to Daniel. If not for Zara, he would have beat him to a pulp.

"You shouldn't have stopped me, Zara," Abram said while driving.

"If I didn't, you both would have killed each other," she silently cried.

"Why are you still protecting him? He left you. He didn't even care for your love; forget about our friendship."

"Though he divorced me, I still love him, I can't see him getting hurt, and I never want to be the reason for hatred between you two."

"You know very well who is the reason behind our hatred for each other. How can you blame yourself?"

1

We both are so unlucky in love, Abram sighed.

"Maira, get your ass moving right now, or we will be late," Sharon yelled from her room while applying her signature red lipstick, which blended well with her long black slit gown.

"Alright, alright, you are so bossy, poor Elijah; how would he survive with you," Maira said while wearing her heels.

When there was a knock on the door, Sharon said, "It must be Elijah, let's go."

The moment the door was opened, Elijah was stunned. "Wow, you both are looking just wow."

While Maira replied to his compliment while Sharon was waiting for more, "and?"

"And you are looking for a killer baby," he said with a wink.

"I would have preferred; I look hot and sexy, never mind," Sharon replied while sliding into the car.

Maira was looking stunning with the V-neck emerald green gown that had a slit till her knee. She paired the gown with black Dazzler with nude makeup and black heels. She looked elegant yet breathtaking, unlike other females, whose faces were covered with thick layers of makeup and body in revealing dresses.

Maira was enjoying the party with her close friends; on the other end, Abram was sulking.

First Daniel and now Elijah, good job Maira, you have the knack to separate friends, Abram sneered, looking at laughing Maira from afar.

I saw it with my own eyes. She was coming out of Daniel's house.

Ma, how can you have such cheap thinking.

Tell me, my son, when Zara was not at her home, what Maira was doing alone with her husband?

Maybe she went to meet Zara and seeing her not there, she came out.

Really? Are you that dumb, my son? She said she is going to stay with her parents that night, and she ended up in Zara's

home? Are you saying this? Why don't you ask her where she was last night?

I know my wife will never do such a thing, but I will ask her in front of you for your sake.

"You lied to me then, and you lied to me now. When I am setting you free, why are you acting all sad and innocent?"

The possessive beast inside him was roaring with jealousy when he saw how her colleagues were trying to get near her. Her breathtaking look was enraging him more. He had an urge to go and rip her dress apart and claim her as his. He was fuming when he saw Maira putting her hand on Elijah's arm while Elijah placed his hand on her waist. That was the last straw to his fury, and he stormed towards them.

"Maira, what happened?" Elijah was holding Maira, who felt her head spinning.

"Elijah, my head is spinning," she said while leaning on Elijah for support.

"Let me call...." before he could say, *let me call Sharon*, he felt Maira being pulled away. He raised his head to see angry Abram holding Maira by her waist.

"Mr. Ali, what are you doing? Let go of me," Maira said with whatever energy was left in her.

"I should be asking you that, just how many men do you need?"
Abram roared, which attracted the crowd.

Sharon, seeing the commotion, rushed towards them and saw weak Maira in Abram's arm.

"Please don't create a scene here. People are watching," she pleaded.

"Mr. Ali, leave Maira right now or.." Elijah couldn't see Maira's helpless state.

"Or what? Well, stop me if you can," with that saying, Abram pulled Maira closer, grabbing her neck, and sealed his lips over her. Maira had been already dizzy, and with his sudden pull, it took her a few seconds to realize that Abram was kissing her roughly and that too in front of everybody. The room suddenly fell silent, and she could hear people gasping.

Divorce

With no energy left in her, he let him do whatever he wanted. Abram only stopped when he felt her hands drop down by her side, and she stood motionless. When he pulled away, he saw her eyes closed and face emotionless.

1

Shit, I did it again, Abram thought.

Realizing that he stopped kissing her, she slowly opened her eyes and said in a low voice, "You won, you finally made me a whore in front of everyone, congratulation," with a weak smile.

1

Hearing her, he let go of her immediately, but she said nothing, nor she cried. She turned to Sharon and said, "My head is spinning. Can you take me home?"

2

Sharon walked up to her and held her to stop her from falling. She turned to Elijah and said, "Baby get the car immediately," while giving a hateful look towards stunned Abram.

Baby? She called him a baby. Does that mean she and Elijah are together and not Maira? Abram thought.

When the trio left, the room was still silent. Seeing that his little stunt was witnessed by everyone in the room, he yelled, "Never seen a husband kissing his wife before?" and with that, he left, leaving behind the anxious murmurs.

Husband and wife? The same thought was running in their minds.

Abram was banging his car's steering wheel repeatedly, "What the fuck is going on with me?" he screamed. By the time he stopped banging the steering wheel, he was panting and cursed himself with all the possible words he could recollect at that moment.

1

He ran both his hands in his hair in frustration, "Why do things have to go so fucking complicated?" Feeling utterly clueless, he drove towards his parent's house. He didn't want to be alone at that moment and needed his best friend. However, when he came to his mother's room, something attracted his attention.

"What do you mean, she is working in the same company?" Ruby was talking to someone over the phone.

"No matter how much she tries, I will get rid of her this time either by hook or by crook."

What does she mean by this time? Abram thought.

"I know my son, I know how to twist his emotions, the brainless girl doesn't even know why she is getting divorced. She doesn't know me; if I can make her lose her child, I can do anything to her," she snorted.

2

After a few exchanges of words, Ruby ended the call. She opened the door, looked around to find no one, and went towards the living room. She was surprised to see her son lying on the couch.

"When did you come?"

"Are you not happy to see me?" Abram replied indifferently.

"Of course, I am happy. If you told me before coming, I would have prepared your favorite dinner," she said with a nervous laugh.

"I thought of surprising my mother since she always complains I don't meet her often. By the way, what were you doing?"

"Me? Nothing, just sitting in the room," Ruby said, but Abram already knew.

"Where is Zara?" he asked.

"Oh, she was feeling sad, so I asked her to go shopping. You don't spend much time with her; she doesn't have any friends either."

"You will be staying here tonight?" she added, on hearing no response from her son.

"Of course, can't I fulfill my mother's small request?" he replied, but there was something different in his tone.

Ma never had any issue with Maira, and even Maira doted on her, even calling her best mother-in-law. How can she talk about her with so much hatred? What does she mean to make her lose her child? Wasn't that child not mine? I tricked her into abortion to punish her for cheating on me. Am I missing something?

Thinking of Maira, Abram felt dejected. Her emotionless face was haunting him and making him feel self-loath. Hearing his mother's talk, he felt there was some missing piece in the jigsaw. Something was amiss, and he needed to find out before he regretted any of his action later. He decided to keep an eye on his mother just to clear his uncertainties.

The next day when Abram was contemplating how to unveil what his mother's word means, he got the disturbing news, Maira's immediate resignation, and to top it off, she didn't come to the office. He even tried calling her number, but it turned out to be switched off.

"Ms. Addison, where is Ms. Noor?" with no option left, he had to ask Sharon.

"I don't know," was her curt reply.

"You do know that she will face the consequence if she makes an impulsive decision." He said.

"Whatever it will be, it will not be worse than what she is already facing, Mr. Ali," she retorted.

He even tried to talk to Elijah, yet he got the same response as Sharon's. Even when she didn't turn up the second day, Abram grew restless. He already had his plate full of issues to address to solve the complications in his life, and now Maira disappeared.

He went to an extent to visit her apartment but was disappointed to see it closed. Her departing words were constantly ringing in his head, *You won*.

"Please, Ms. Addison, I know you know where she is, at least, do me a favor and ask her to talk to me," he had to let his pride aside and request Sharon.

1

"Haven't you had enough? Because of you, she tried to end her life once. Are you doing all this to drive her to kill herself?" the

intensity of hatred she had while saying that was not unnoticeable.

"What do you mean she tried to end her life?" Abram stood up. He somehow recollected the day he saw a bandage on her wrist.

"Don't act as if you care about her now because we both know the truth."

Knowing there was no point talking out to Sharon, he tried following her but ended up disappointed when she went to her home and was alone.

On the third day of his waiting for Maira, he had to hire an investigator to find Maira and keep track of his mother's phone records. He was expecting a call from him to give any information about Maira; however, he was disappointed when it was from his mother informing him about attending tomorrow's court hearing.

The next day, Maira was talking to her lawyer, who seemed to have a wary expression on his face. She felt someone's gaze and turned to see Abram talking to someone over the phone while looking at her with an unknown expression.

1

This is it. After today I will not have anything to do with him, Maira thought.

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