

A Peek inside...

CHAPTER 1

The Wedding Day

Awakened by Bluebirds chirping outside her window. Jazmine turned over to gaze at her wedding dress, with pearls and lace, hanging on the outside of her closet door. *Wow, this is it, this is the big day.* She smiled but had mixed emotions about how her life might change.

Noah had been acting strange and she had no idea why. Determined not to focus on her concerns about him, she put all her energy into celebrating her special day. The aroma of bacon and toast filled the air while she jumped out of bed. She threw water on her face, brushed her teeth, and got dressed for her morning jog when she heard a knock on her door.

"Yes?" she said.

"Hey sweetie, are you awake?" her mom asked.

"Good morning, Mom, yes I am. Come on in."

“Good morning, baby, I’m so excited for you. This is your big day. Everything is in order, so you have nothing to worry about.”

“Oh, I’m not worried, Mom. I’m happy and just a little nervous, but I’m good. I’m going to go for a jog, so maybe that’ll help to calm my nerves.”

“I’m sure that’ll help. I made breakfast if you want to grab a bite to eat before heading out. I bet Noah is excited and nervous too.”

“Maybe so.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Well, he’s still working in DC and I’m not sure when he’ll be coming back home to stay. He keeps saying he’s working on a big project, which involves millions of dollars, so he can’t leave yet. I don’t like it, but I guess I’ll just have to be patient. I’m sorry Mom, I shouldn’t be telling you all of this on my wedding day. I don’t want you to be thinking about any of that. I’m sure everything will work out.”

“Yes, it will. But I don’t want you trying to control everything on your own, Jazmine. So, if you need help or just want to talk about it, you know I’m here for you.”

"I know Mom."

She took a couple of bites from a bagel with cream cheese and gave her mom a kiss.

"I'll be back shortly."

"Be careful out there. Do you have your taser on you?"

"Yes."

Jazmine hoped jogging would help to relieve her anxiety about marrying Noah. She'd just Graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in Education. One year prior, he'd taken a job as an Engineer at Genentech, in Washington, DC, and promised to return home when they got married. At first, they traveled back and forth to visit each other, but she became uncomfortable when he started spending more time in DC. She loved the crisp morning air against her skin, as jogging and watching the birds hover over Lake Merritt gave her a sense of peace. *This is so therapeutic.* Living in the bay area and being a part of all it had to offer, had captured her heart. Although Oakland, like most urban cities had its issues with crime, Jazmine had grown accustomed to being cautious with her surroundings while appreciating all the different cultures. A mixture of flavors from the restaurants as they started to prepare food for the day filled the air.

After her jog, her excitement and anticipation increased as time for the wedding approached. The weather had forecasted around eighty-degrees with a light breeze.

Even though she never imagined it would happen, she always dreamed of getting married in an elegant outside setting. They agreed on having a small wedding, limited only to family and close friends.

The wedding took place at 3:00 pm on Saturday, May 8th, 2021, in the Berkeley hills overlooking the bay area. The picturesque landscape provided a scenic display with plenty of shade trees. The wedding party included her sister, Jessica, as her maid of honor, and her two closest friends, Erica, and Sophia, as her bridesmaids.

Jazmine impressed everyone in her stunning custom-made wedding dress with her hair artfully braided in a chic updo. Ringlets hung down to adorn her face, and she wore a beaded hair piece, which complimented her hair. Her smooth chocolate skin and almond shaped eyes captivated Noah as he couldn't take his eyes off her. Their love and affection toward each other

showed on their faces as they never stop smiling.
Jazmine had fallen

head over heels in love with Noah and she loved everything about him. He had a charming personality, a sexy smile, and his athletic build made it hard for her to resist him. He had spoiled her, and she loved it, but his love for her went beyond her ability to capture his attention. He admired her sensitivity and desire to help others in dealing with their problems. The next day they flew to Honolulu, Hawaii to celebrate their honeymoon for a week.

"You alright baby?" Noah asked. "I know you don't like flying but we'll be there soon."

"I'm good," she said, squeezing his hand. "I hate turbulence and I don't think I'll ever get used to this crap."

"Do you want something to drink to help you relax?"

"No, I'll be fine."

"Hello everyone, sorry for the bumpy ride," the pilot said. "Due to a storm, we hit a rough patch. But rest assured we'll be landing in beautiful Honolulu, in about

twenty minutes, where the temperature is in the high eighties.”

During their honeymoon, they had a great time swimming, snorkeling, and having romantic dinners by the ocean. She became uneasy, the closer it got to the end of their honeymoon because she’d been waiting for the right time to tell him about her new job, and to discuss when he’d be moving back to California. On their flight home, they held hands and talked about all the fun they had in Hawaii. When they arrived at his high-rise apartment, he reminded her he needed to return to work the next morning.

CHAPTER 2

After the Honeymoon

When Noah got home from work, Jazmine had surprised him by cooking his favorite meal. He’d stopped by the store and picked up a bottle of wine before heading home.

“Hey baby, how was your day?” she asked. “You look a little tired. Did you make any progress on the project?”

"Yes, it was a productive day, but we still have a long way to go. Come here, I missed you." He pulled her close to him and kissed her. "It sure smells good in here, what did you cook?"

"Rib eye steak with mash potatoes."

"Yum, rib eye steak. That sounds delicious. I'll take a quick shower and I'll be right back."

"Alright, I'll set the table."

Jazmine was eager to tell him about her new job offer and to discuss his return to California. After his shower he went back into the kitchen for dinner.

"You feel a little better now?" she asked.

"Yes, sometimes that job wears me out. It's not so much the work, it's my coworkers. At times they wait until the last minute to finish their part of the project, which slows down the progress of getting it completed. But I've been dealing with this since I started, so you'd think I'd be used to it by now. For the most part, I do enjoy my job though."

Jazmine couldn't care less about whether he enjoyed his job.

"I understand your frustration. And I'm glad you feel better. I've been slaving over that stove for hours, so let's eat."

He smiled. "Okay Jazz if you say so. It looks delicious."

"Thank you, baby. I hope you like it."

"Wow, this taste really good, Jazz. I need to hurry up and move back home if you're going to be cooking like this," he said, laughing.

After they cleaned up the kitchen, Jazmine was ready to discuss her concerns.

"Let's sit on the couch and have a glass of wine," she said.

"Okay, I'll get the bottle out of the fridge and grab a couple of glasses."

"I have something I want to talk with you about."

He filled their glasses with wine, and after taking a couple of sips, he'd gave her his undivided attention.

"Two weeks ago, I accepted a position at Saint Mary's High School as an English teacher. I didn't want to mention it to you earlier because we were about to get married and go on our honeymoon, so I wanted to wait

until we got back home. Plus, even though I accepted the position, I really didn't know if I should've taken it. I wondered if I should just move to Washington DC with you until you're able to come back home. So, when are you moving back to California?" she asked.

He sat his glass on the table. "Wow, congratulations baby, that's great, I'm so proud of you. I'm a little surprised you're just now telling me this. I mean, why didn't you tell me this before? Are we keeping secrets now?"

"Oh, no, no, I just didn't want anything to spoil our honeymoon, and I wasn't sure how you'd take it. I was expecting to start in September, but during the interview, to my surprise, they asked if I could start in June to teach summer school. I was hesitant at first, but I accepted it because this'll give me a chance to get familiar with teaching before the regular season starts."

"Oh wow, so you'll be starting soon."

"Yeah, pretty soon now."

"So, when are you moving back to Cali? Your manager knows we got married, right?"

"Yes, of course, but we have another major project coming up, which involves a big financial gain for the company. So, I'll be moving back to California when it's completed. When you get home, you can find a nice place for us, while I wrap things up here."

"Uh, okay, sounds like a good idea."

She wasn't happy he'd no immediate plans to come home but held back her emotions. The rest of the week, she made the best of their time together and cooked delicious meals or made reservations for a romantic dinner. At the end of the week, she had to pack up and leave for California to prepare for her new job.

Sunday afternoon, Noah drove her to the Washington National Airport for her 2:00 pm flight. On the way to the airport, they were quieter than normal. When they approached the drop off point, tears filled both their eyes while he held her hand. He parked the car, then got out to get her luggage. They held each other and kissed while trying to control their emotions. She pulled out a couple of tissues to wipe their faces. She hadn't seen him that emotional in a long time, not since his father passed.

“Call me when your flight arrives in California,” Noah said, while helping to check in her luggage.

“I will baby.”

That week Jazmine found an apartment she loved and called Noah right away.

“Hey baby, what do you think about the pictures I sent? I really love it. It has a nice view overlooking the bay and it has three bedrooms, which means we can have a room for an office and one for guests.”

“It looks nice. So, if you really want it, and it feels right, just get it.”

“Okay, I’ll put down the deposit right now, and I’ll call you back this evening.”

“Sounds good. And thanks Jazz for finding us a place to stay. I’m sorry I couldn’t be there to help you.”

The following weekend, Noah flew to California to help her with the move-in. Since they didn’t have much furniture, they went out and purchased new bedroom, living room, and kitchen furniture. He’d only come for a couple of days, which increased her anxiety because she figured he wouldn’t be there for the delivery date.