

Sneak peak of *More than*

*Beautiful*

**Sneak Peek into *More Than Beautiful* - Available Now on Amazon!**

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In this heartfelt and compelling story, *More Than Beautiful* explores themes of self-acceptance, emotional healing, and the powerful realization that true beauty lies in knowing and loving yourself - without waiting for anyone else's approval.

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## **The Contract**

She settled down at the back of her car holding the document and wondered why things had to go wrong this time. Lisa believed that, this time, her company would win the prestigious contract.

Less than 48 hours ago, she was excited for this and couldn't imagine the sudden end. Her hopes had been crashed, leading her to fume for the incident with a rapid heartbeat. "I knew no one liked me. I am not loved. Why was I expecting to win? You are a failure, Lisa!" She mutters to herself.

With a frown on her face and a lot of thoughts running through her brain, she repeated those negative words to herself.

Her mind took her back to a few minutes ago in the office of Mr. Micheals.

She gazed and smiled to herself, as she placed her left feet on the parking lot of the 5 storey glass building, lifting herself from the back seat of her orange 4-wheel drive. Lisa pushed the door closed as she straightened her black ladies suit.

Her face rounded and looks amazed at what she believed would happen to her in that office. The joy of winning tagged at her heart.

"Daniel, kindly park the car at the far end" she instructed.

"Please, this is where the car must be parked; at the right side a few spaces away from the exit. Don't move until I return from the meeting," She revealed. Daniel nodded, as she gave way for Daniel to position the car to the directed space.

She looked up at the tall building of Events and Associates, and had no doubt in her mind that she was going to be the right candidate to win the contract this time around. Events and Associates was fond of organizing remarkable events in the area of West Avenue and beyond, which included both corporate and social events. She had a sure expression on her face, which made her believe she was going to take the title.

She murmured, "Am I the one who is about to win this contract? I can't believe that I was invited by Davis himself to meet him for the contract." Her face continued to round up and her cheeks slowly shifted upwards.

She walked gracefully to the entrance as the security man at the gate ushered her in.

“Welcome ma’am,” he greeted. She nodded, and smiled in affirmation.

She padded through to the front desk. As soon as she was an inch to the reception table, the receptionist stood up and greeted with a smile, “Welcome, madam Lisa. Let me make a call to Mr. Davis to inform him that you are in.”

Lisa, with a smily face, though she was still surprised on the kind of gesture she had just received, replied “Why not? That is why I am here”.

After the phone conversation, the receptionist announced, “You may go in,” as she pointed to the entrance of the fourth floor. “Kindly use the elevator. It’s the second office on the left.” she continued.

“Okay, I got it.” Lisa acknowledged.

Lisa followed the directions of the receptionist, and on the 4th floor, on the left, she knocked on the door with the inscription CEO, Mr. Davis Michaels.

“Come in please,” she heard, and gently opened the door into his office. Upon seeing her, Mr Michaels hailed her with all the accolades he knew about her. “Lisa McShan, I have heard a lot of great things about your firm. I’m glad to have you in my wonderful office. Please have a seat.” He directed her to sit.

“Would you care for water?” he asked.

“That’s ok.” she replied.

As she moved, she was a bit surprised but filled with hope. Lisa sat on a soft black chair, which was opposite her host.

“Thank You, Davis, it is a great privilege to be in your office.” she said as she made herself comfortable.

“I am so glad you honoured my invitation. How is business? And how is your distribution going? He asked politely.

“Business is going well, and we’re looking to expand our reach to additional areas across the country. Our goal is to increase distribution, particularly to companies that organize events. We aim to supply these companies with items like concert chairs and other event accessories.” she responded.

“Although Lisa Initiatives LLC initially focused on distributing corporate furniture and fixtures, that line has become somewhat seasonal. To stay active and promote growth, we’ve expanded our product offerings rather than waiting for sales to pick up. We’re constantly learning and adapting every day to keep the company moving forward.” She explained further.

“You are right, we also want to add up to the concert and festivals to bring spice to the product lines, too, since our brand is well known for organizing and managing corporate conferences and other social events like weddings, parties, birthday parties”. He responded.

“We decided to bring spice to attract attention in those areas since we have been successful in the minds of users for the organizing and management of events for over 20 years now.”

“Yea, I believed so, and it is good to explore other areas in our business chains whilst we have the opportunities as business personnel,” she replied, opening to his conversations.

“Lisa, do you know something?” He asks, to which Lisa responded, “No.”

“Do you know the qualities I like about your business and you as their leader?”

She yearned to find more. With ears attentive to hear more, she responded with a shy smile,

“Tell me. I would love to hear it. Let it flow.”

“Okay, I will.” He said and continued.

“Areas I wish my business would learn from your business is the customer service and quality products you have on board. Though my business has not done much with you, I have personally used your rectangle wooden desk for four years and it’s still in good shape. I have friends who are into businesses just like me who patronized your products. I really like the extent of the durability of your materials and customer service.”

“Since we are humans with imperfect experiences, we cannot be perfect in all areas. It is great to learn from the best as they also learn from you.” He said.

“May I know some of your friends who have use my products, I would love to know?” She quizzed. “Alpha group,” he responded.

With a tap on her forehead, she cheerfully continued, “Oh, yea, Alpha group is one of my loyal customers and I am not surprised they recommended me. It’s been 5 years doing business with them, and they keep recommending me. In fact, I love what they do”.

“Absolutely. That is great,” Davis continues.

“I have heard news about your customer services, and I would love to learn from you.” He confided.

She mused, “My work was not appreciated by my customers because I only receive bad reviews, so I believe I am not loved”.

“Did you say my product has been in use for four years now?” She enquired.

“Oh yes, four years and it’s still in good shape.” He responded

She still wondered why it was possible. She smiled, “Yes, quality comes first, followed by our customer service. I believe our customers—just like you—are one of the biggest factors in our company’s growth. We want to care for them sincerely, to empathize with their needs. Their

concerns should be our concerns, and we must provide products that truly help them. Above all, the durability of our materials is essential." Lisa spoke.

"Every word you said here is true for customer service and quality. That is why I think I can learn something from you," Davis complimented.

"Thank you for the compliment, Davis." She beamed with a broad smile.

He took a document from his cabinet and positioned it at the centre of the table.

"When I saw your application submission for our furniture tender request, I was glad to see that you had applied. That is one of the reasons why I called to have you in my office to personally inform you about the result and whether or not you have won the contract."

Her smile dropped a little, as he informed her.

"You have to keep in mind that whatever be the results I, Davis, still wants to do business with you."

"Exactly, that is the main reason why I came here, per the email you sent." Lisa clarifies.

"I realized that you missed two document, which was supposed to be attached to the proposal during the in-person delivery at this premise. Though, I am the Chief Executive Officer here, I could not do anything. The procurement department makes the final decision, and they are governing by rules and policies. Rules are rules, you know?"

She nodded with the faintest smile.

"I don't have that power; I couldn't change it. This is the result; it is that you didn't win the 100 million contract."

Upon hearing the news, she kept quiet for a minute to catch her breath before she could speak again

"Why, did you reject my application? I made sure that everything was on point." She lamented.

"Lisa, everything was on point, but you know this contract was worth 100 million in value and we needed to make sure you had good financial standing to partially pre-finance the project. None of the evidence document was attached, and clientele stories were also not attached. That is the main standpoint you need to win this kind of tender. We wanted to see the financials to convince us. Your firm brought none." He explained.

Lisa kept quiet as he gave more update.

"I know you are a successful businesswoman who will not compromise on opportunities when they come. Unfortunately, this time, it did not come your way. That is why before I announced the results, I gave you a caveat that whatever happens, we are ready to do business with you. We have multiple collaborations and partnership each time. I believe

there are reasons why things happen in life. More opportunities will come. Just trust the process. Don't worry for now. You just must be ready to deliver when it comes. Now, this is the new avenue for you. We want to partner with you to distribute corporate chairs to 45 clients on our database. But before we finalized, I will invite you in again to discuss more partnership and contract opportunities." He concluded.

"Why do you still want to give me another contract after losing this one? Do you think my firm is worthy to deliver?" She asked curiously.

"Hmm, Lisa, you see, your firm is one of the top furniture distributors here in the West Avenue area and beyond. You're the best, with top-notch service, and I'd be making a big mistake if I didn't award you this contract. But for the 100-million project, my hands are tied—I can't do anything about it. If you're worried that a competitor has overtaken you, don't be. No one in this country won that contract; it was awarded to an international company," he replied, reassuring Lisa.

"Yes, when one opportunity closes, another opens—same company. I'm glad to be working with you on this project and look forward to finalizing everything soon. It's a pleasure to meet you in person, Mr. Michaels, and I'm excited to build a strong partnership with you."

After she accepted the results of the tender, Davis handed her a letter enclosed in an envelope. Lisa smiled as she received it.

"I think the main reason for this meeting is clear. Is everything clear, Lisa?" Davis urges.

"Absolutely. I think everything is clear. We will be waiting for your invitation again to talk more about the other contract."

They both exchanged business cards.

"Okay, I will take my leave, and I will communicate with you via phone or email," Lisa assured.

Davis stood from his soft black chair and Lisa also rose from her seat. They both shared a handshake and a hug.

As she walked out and closed the door behind her, she wondered why she'd been awarded the small contract instead of the bigger one. "There was a major contract I could have landed. We have the capacity to deliver—why didn't he choose us?" she thought. She headed straight to the elevator, pressed the button to the ground floor, and soon appeared at the front desk.

She gave a wave and smiled at the receptionist.

At the entrance, her soft expression change to a furious one as she walked to her orange car and sat in it.

During that reflection, she crumbled the cover letter she had received from the Mr. Michaels in her left hand.

“Move the car,” she commanded. “I said, move the car, driver,” She shouted again, and with a stern expression from the driver, he moved.

## Still ponders.

“Ma’am, we’re here,” Daniel called out as he parked the car. She raised her left hand to her stomach and glanced at her wristwatch. “You took 30 minutes to drive here from 7th Avenue to 5th Street. It’s usually only 15 minutes to the office.”

“There was a traffic jam on the road, Madam Lisa,” he replied.

“Alright, never mind. You can park in the underground lot,” she said, stepping out of the car. She looked up at the four-story office building, her gaze settling on the showroom that occupied the ground and first floors. “All this space, all these assets filled with furniture, and they say I don’t have the capacity to deliver,” she thought, shaking her head in disbelief. She slowly walked to her office on the second floor.

Once inside, she instructed her secretary, Joyce Mintah, “Don’t allow anyone into my office unless I tell you to, okay?” Joyce nodded, agreeing to follow her instructions. Lisa closed the door firmly behind her, exhaled a tired sigh, and took a chilled bottle of water from the mini fridge near the door.

She sank into the green, plush sofa. “Today has been so stressful, even though it shouldn’t have been,” she murmured. Her eyes drifted to some documents on her wooden desk, and her mind wandered back to Davis’s office and the disappointment of his announcement. She vividly remembered the experience, the emotions that surged through her when he said she hadn’t won the 100-million project. The intense anticipation she’d carried into that meeting was undeniable.



Her stomach churned as her heartbeat quickened, the usual signs of tension and frustration welling up inside her. "I wish I could have shouted so loud that the whole world would hear me when he said, 'You didn't win it,'" she thought, her face tightening in frustration.

After a moment, she stood up, refocused, and moved to her black office chair at the rectangular wooden desk. She opened her i10 Core laptop, which was still on her email page from earlier that morning, and scrolled through her inbox with a busy look, searching for the email that had led to today's meeting.

"Oh, yea here it is," she whispered and clicked on it.

She read.

Dear Lisa Mcshan,

I trust you are good.

This is Davis Michaels, The CEO of Events and Associates. I would love to have a meeting with you to discuss the announcement of the result of the tender of the concert chairs distribution contract and other business collaboration with you.

Kindly let me know your acknowledgement on this.

Looking forward to your prompt reply.

Kind Regards

Davis Michaels

CEO, Event & Associates

As she read, her thought took her back to the experience she encountered when she received it for the first time on 12th January. She was cheerful and could not wait to read it and meet him in person.

She read her reply to his email.

Dear Mr. Michaels,

Thank you for reaching out to us here at Lisa Initiatives LLC.

On behalf of this firm, I appreciate the effort to invite me personally to your office to discuss the result of the tender.

Is 15th January, 9am GMT okay for you?

Kindly let me know your confirmation.

Looking forward to your response.

Kind Regards,

Lisa McShan,

CEO

Lisa Initiatives LLC

She read and gave a beautiful stare as she continued to read the email thread.

Dear Miss McShan,

The scheduled date and time is perfect for me. Can you schedule the meeting with my receptionist, Brand Michaels, on 092 4858 942 to book your place.

I can't wait to meet you.

Looking forward to a fruitful meeting with you.

She smiled briefly, but her face stiffened as she reflected on the excitement she once felt, only to be humbled by the reality. Lost in thought, she picked up her phone and called Joyce.

"Don't make any mistakes. Call this number, 092 4858 942, and schedule a meeting with Mr. Davis Michaels and me. Let me know once it's confirmed," she instructed.

Her expression darkened, her lips pursed tightly as the memories flashed by, barely containing her frustration. She replayed the events in her mind, questioning if all the required documents were correctly submitted with the application and wondering who might be responsible if they weren't. She hadn't personally assembled the paperwork for the tender. With a loud snap, she closed her laptop forcefully and reached for the office phone to call Joyce again—the second call that day. She needed answers.

"Joyce, call in the development team responsible for the concert chair proposal to my office. Now!" she commanded, hanging up the phone with a thud.

I blame you

A knock sounded at the door.

"Come in," Lisa responded.

The development team entered her office in sequence. Evans Watson stepped in first, followed by Evana Attah and Steven Josephs. Each wore a tense expression, as if they already sensed the gravity of the situation.

Lisa folded her arms across her chest as they approached, her face set in a hard line, clearly preparing to let loose. Evans moved forward and began to pull a visitor's chair out to sit.

"Who told you to sit down? Your colleagues are still standing there. Do you think you're more important than them?" Lisa shouted, her voice sharp. Evans looked startled, shaking his head in submission.

"No, madam," he replied, quickly moving back to stand with his teammates, who watched with wide eyes, visibly taken aback by the exchange.

Lisa sighed. "I know you're surprised by my reaction, but I'm not satisfied with the work you did. Something went wrong with the concert chair distribution proposal."

Steven looked confused. "Ma'am, we don't know what's going on. Based on how we've been received here, unless you tell us, we have no idea what happened."

"Who among you prepared the proposal?" Lisa asked, her eyes blazing.

"We all worked on it," they replied in unison, gesturing to show they had collaborated.

"Who gathered the documents?" she pressed.

Steven raised his hand slightly. "I did."

"And who made sure all the necessary documents were attached?"

With a firm voice, Evana responded, "I did, madam."

"Lastly, who reviewed the proposal to make sure we understood it fully?"

"I did," Evans answered.

"Evans, you're the team leader. Your role was to read through the procurement documents, understand them thoroughly, and ensure your team did too. I'm talking about the concert chair proposal."

"Yes, madam—the Events & Associates tender," he replied. "We knew it mattered to you, so we took our time to get it right."

"You took your time! Are you telling me that?" Lisa's voice rose. "Absolutely not—you did the opposite."

Turning to Evana, she continued, "And you, Evana, your responsibility was to check every requirement and document, especially to catch any errors Evans might have missed."

"Oh, madam, I ensured everything was in order," Evana responded defensively.

"Be quiet, Evana. You did the opposite here," Lisa snapped. Evana fell silent under Lisa's glare.

"Team," Lisa continued, tapping her fingers on the table, "do you realize that we missed two essential documents that should have been attached? We lost that contract because of this."

At that moment, the office door opened, and Lucy McCarthy entered. Lisa's expression darkened as she addressed her, "And you—what are you doing here?"

Ignoring the warning in Lisa's voice, Lucy walked in, maneuvered past the team to the green sofa, crossed her legs, and folded her arms, appearing unfazed by the tension in the room.

Lisa sighed, the team looking back and forth between her and Lucy in shock.

Lisa redirected her attention to the team. "We missed two documents that were critical for this bid—financials and the client testimonials. Because of that, we lost the 100-million contract to another company. How could you let this happen?" She pointed at each of them as she spoke. "I am so disappointed in all of you."

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